

theories
and
critical
studies



progress



A. ZHELOKHOVTSEV

The “Cultural Revolution”: a Close-Up

A. ZHELOKHOVTSEV

The "Cultural Revolution":
a Close – Up
(An Eyewitness Account)



PROGRESS PUBLISHERS
MOSCOW

А. ЖЕЛОХОВЦЕВ

«КУЛЬТУРНАЯ РЕВОЛЮЦИЯ» С БЛИЗКОГО РАССТОЯНИЯ

На английском языке

First printing 1975

© Translation into English, Progress Publishers 1975

Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Ж 60103-635
014(01)-75 112-75

CONTENTS

I. MY WAY TO CHINA	7
I Choose Oriental Studies. Striking New Friendships. My First Trip to China. Scientific Research. A Vision of Peking's Libraries.	
II. ON THE EVE OF THE DISASTER	11
Entry Visa Issued. The Peking Station. Official Reception. Altercation. Studies at the Library. The First Debate. Department Head. Short Meetings. Cinema Entertainment. Festivals. Attempted Murder. May Fireworks Display. Planetarium. Trip to Tientsin.	
III. THE MOVEMENT EXPLODES	44
Teng To's "Black Books". The First Tatzupao. Anarchy. Hsiang Café. "Dual Rule". The June 3 Assault.	
IV. THE FIRST DAYS OF THE NEW POWER	65
Drumbeats. Visit to Peita. Summary Trial at the Stadium. Wang Seized. "Humaneness Is a Disease of the Brain". I Am Questioned by the "Revolutionaries". Captive Beaten Up. How Long Can a Man Stand with His Hands Up?	
V. EVERYDAY LIFE UNDER NEW REGIME	80
Raïd on a Flat. A Physicist. A Kind Word. Work Team at the Entrance. Feeding the "Freaks and Monsters". On the Lake. Snicides.	
VI. THE "WORKING GROUP": TRIUMPH AND DISGRACE	95
Ceremonial Entry. The "Opportunists" and the "Leftists". Confused Extremists. "Chairman Mao Is Back!"—Chiang Ching Speaks. The Rout.	

VII. TRIP ACROSS CHINA	118
The Sian City Committee Holds Out. A Workers' Hotel. <i>The Song of Ouyang Hai</i> . Yen-an—Mao's Chief Wartime Base. A Peasant Describes His Meeting with Mao. A Chinese Village	
VIII. THE AUGUST POGROMS	137
Conversation in a Taxi-Cab. Hungweiping Lair, "Red Guards" in Peking. Feverish Decade, Pogrom. Murder in the Railway-Station Square. Soviet Embassy Blockaded	
IX. THE HUNGWEIPING REIGN	159
September Swing. A Peking American. Hungweiping Feuds. Raids on the Provinces. The Way to Become a Hungweiping. Mao in Uniform, Chinese Myths	
X. WRECKERS AT LARGE	191
"Down with Museums and Monuments!" Death of the Writer Lao-She. Tien Han's Lot. Renegades from Chinese Culture	
XI. CANNED CULTURE	211
Classics Overthrown. Drive Against the Stage. Down with Shakespeare and Balzac! Anti-Soviet Dough. "Inspiration—a Bourgeois Survival"	
XII. THE LAST DAYS	224
My Teacher's Lot. Hungweiping Indulges in Confidences. Peking Party Committee Blocked. Hungweipings in Army Uniform. I Go Home	

I. MY WAY TO CHINA

I CHOOSE ORIENTAL STUDIES. STRIKING NEW FRIENDSHIPS.
MY FIRST TRIP TO CHINA. SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.
A VISION OF PEKING'S LIBRARIES

A Sinologist is one who studies China's economy, culture, history and language, including its written characters. My own Chinese studies started in the autumn of 1952, when I joined the Moscow Institute of Orientology. By our third year, we students already knew a good deal about China, had mastered the required number of complex characters, and were looking forward to an opportunity to test our knowledge of the vernacular in conversations with our Chinese comrades.

I had my first chance at the World Youth Festival in Moscow in the summer of 1957. The Chinese delegation was a very big one, so that interpreters were in great demand and we students were also invited to take part. I met our Chinese guests at the border, and escorted them to Moscow on a five-day trip by train across the whole of Siberia. I shall always look back on the Festival as a landmark of my young days. I took my new friends, the flower of China's rising generation, on strolls along the streets of Moscow, to theatres and museums. I had come to like them very much. Shortly after, I set foot on Chinese soil with a group of student trainees at the Manchuli railway station. My notebook was full of addresses and telephone numbers, for I had almost as many acquaintances in Peking as in Moscow. I was hoping that the spirit of the Moscow Festival would follow us to China, but my Peking friends seemed to have changed out of all recognition. Many of them, particularly those who had the warmest feeling for the Soviet Union and for me personally, were not there at all, having gone away or disappeared altogether. The rest seemed

to have changed character and even their manner of behaviour. On the whole, something had changed in China. A tyro student of China, I found political life in Peking and the very atmosphere of Chinese society strange, mysterious and enigmatic, for at the time the Maoists were engaged in some very intricate moves. I was surprised by the disappearance of my Chinese friends and could not understand the cautious prudence of those who were still there.

Back at home, I soon passed my final exams, but any appointment to work in China was out of the question: Soviet-Chinese cultural ties were being gradually wound down. I went to work at the Institute of Sinology of the USSR Academy of Sciences, where I concentrated on research into the story in medieval China, and eventually published a book entitled *Huapen: the Urban Story in Medieval China*.

In the course of my research I read everything available in the Soviet Union on my subject, all the reprints of original writings, but I was still badly in need of another trip to China to read up on the subject at the libraries in Peking, for while on my student visit I had yet to choose my field of research and so had not done any purposeful reading.

Moreover, as there was no chance of practising my Chinese, and actual interpreting was becoming increasingly scarce, I was beginning to lose my fluence. In 1961, I acted as guide and interpreter to the Chinese film producer, Chang Shui-hua, who had put out the well-known film, *The White-Haired Girl*. And that was that: from then on visits by Chinese delegations were down to a mere trickle.

Quite unexpectedly, in the late summer of 1965, eight years after my first trip to China, I was told that under an exchange programme between the USSR and PRC Ministries of Higher Education I would be able to revisit China. By that time, quite a few Chinese students had already arrived in the Soviet Union under that programme, so mere reciprocity in relations between states seemed to assure my trip. My imagination, worked up by the news of a possible trip, went back to the Peking that I had known in the spring of 1958. Once again I saw in my mind's eye the great avenue of Eternal Tranquility, cutting across the city centre, the rectangular Tien An Men Square, the tree-lined mainstreet of the Legation Quarter, the high railing of the Kuochi Hotel, and the young couples on the boulevard along the red-brick walls of the British Mission. I could still recall the stir and tumult of the Tachalar trading centre with its countless shops that had been in business for

something like 500 years, and the smell of old paper in the endless rows of the book arcade. I saw Peking as a thronging, bustling and spirited city.

In that one-storeyed, uniquely Chinese city, every rising building, temple or tower stands out in striking contrast to the low skyline. I often pictured the white Buddhist pagodas, the grey unbelievably massive wall running round the ancient city of Peking, the gilded roofs of Kukung, the rich and sprawling Museum of Ancient Palaces, and the giant century-old cypress trees near the Temple of Heaven. Peking is, indeed, an unforgettable city.

When planning my trip, I told myself that this time I would not waste a single minute of my stay in Peking: eight years of research at home had taught me where to look for the precious sources I wanted, the 17th-century woodcut prints; by now I had a knowledge, albeit only from the catalogues, of Chinese scientific writings, whereas on my first visit I had lost my bearings among the second-hand stalls in the Peking arcades and had failed to identify the books I wanted among the ancient editions. I promised myself that things would be different this time.

It turned out, however, that going to China at the time was no simple matter. The months went by but no answer from China was forthcoming. My foreign passport was ready in September 1965, but the green light from the Chinese came only five months later.

Back in July 1960, the Soviet Government had been forced to recall its specialists from China, and since then Soviet-Chinese relations had not shown any sign of change for the better, because the Chinese persisted in their policy of cutting back links and contacts between the two countries.

Ever since 1963, from day to day the Chinese press had carried on an overt anti-Soviet campaign. The struggle against the CPSU was being described as a "class struggle" between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, a struggle which, *Jenmin jilipao* asserted on March 23, 1965, "must go on every day, every month, every year for the next hundred, thousand and even ten thousand years". Its editorial on November 11, 1965, said that the CPC and the CPSU had "much to divide and nothing to unite them, much in contrast and nothing in common". This fundamental declaration of a split was repeated word for word in the CPC's Central Committee's official letter to the CPSU Central Committee on January 7, 1966.

The swelling tide of anti-Sovietism made it very unlikely that

a Soviet specialist would get a warm welcome in China. As a regular reader of the Chinese press, which was quick to make anti-Soviet statements on the flimsiest pretext, ranging from slander on Soviet films to charges of a "deal with imperialism", I was beginning to doubt whether I could go at all.

When the entry visa was at last issued, I had only four days to wind things up: after waiting for months for the formal permission I found that I had to leave almost at once.

II. ON THE EVE OF THE DISASTER

ENTRY VISA ISSUED. THE PEKING STATION. OFFICIAL RECEPTION. ALTERCATION. STUDIES AT THE LIBRARY. THE FIRST DEBATE. DEPARTMENT HEAD. SHORT MEETINGS. CINEMA ENTERTAINMENT. FESTIVALS. ATTEMPTED MURDER. MAY FIREWORKS DISPLAY. PLANETARIUM. TRIP TO TIENTSIN

On February 2, 1966, my three companions and I left Moscow for Peking on board the international express.

When we left the Moscow Region, and the multicoloured domes of Zagorsk had streamed past the window in the frosty haze, a train guard from the Chinese team servicing the express entered our compartment. He was dressed in a military jacket with a button-up high collar and outside breast pockets of exactly the same cut as the Chinese Party uniform, except that it was of a deeper blue.

"Where are you going? Let's have your tickets," he said in deliberate Russian.

"Hello! We are going to Peking to study," I answered him in Chinese on behalf of the whole group.

"Welcome!" he exclaimed in Chinese and broke into a happy smile. "So you're going to study Chinese? And for how long?"

"Ten months."

"Your Chinese is very good, I understand every word you say," he said in line with the old Chinese tradition of civility and politeness.

I told him that I had studied in the USSR and had then stayed in Peking for six months in 1958, but to explain my accent I added that for several years now I had had very little practice and was beginning to slip.

"But of course not!" he answered with a ready good-will. "Your second trip will make your Chinese even better. Staying in Peking?"

I nodded. He suddenly became grave and said without the traditional Chinese smile:

"We don't have many visitors now."

I told him that going to China was indeed no easy thing, that I had had to wait for an opportunity for seven years and had then been delayed for another five months, so missing a part of the academic year.

We went on to discuss the Peking weather and the possible summer heat, something that worried me, since my previous visit had not been in summer. I could not have known at the time that my conversation with the train guard would be one of the very few conversations with any Chinese throughout my long stay.

Once through with the tickets, the train guard asked us what kind of tea we preferred and, since "green!" was our unanimous answer, he brought us packets of molihua tea, the favourite drink in North China which is flavoured with jasmine (moli) flowers. The tea was poured out into thick china tea-mugs with lids painted over with landscape scenery. The guard also provided us with very comfortable Chinese leather slippers and, as we were settling down to our tea, brought in a pile of illustrated *China* magazines for the previous six months.

The customs and other formalities at the Soviet border station were soon over.

I asked the border guard whether there was a lot to do.

"Not very much," he answered handing back our passports, "few people go to China these days."

This cryptic and recurrent phrase made us all somewhat uneasy, although we naturally realised that China must now be a different place and that we could not expect the old welcome: I meant to take any possible surprises in my stride.

One of my acquaintances at home, recently back from China, had once said:

"People in China no longer stop you in the street to express their friendly feelings or try to embrace you."

"Do they at least say hello?" I asked.

"Not often and reluctantly, unless, of course, there is no one else about. But that hardly ever happens. As for speaking to one, they never do."

"Why not? Is that dangerous?"

"It is—for them!"

At the Chinese border, a young Chinese border guard stood in the doorway of our compartment and scrutinised our

passports, with two other men looking in over his shoulder. He was so slow and deliberate that I could not help smiling.

"Are there only four of you? Why not five?" he suddenly asked.

So, the border guard seemed to know all about us. There had, in fact, been five of us due to go to Peking, but one young woman had to stay behind to care for her sick husband.

The customs inspection over, we were invited to the waiting room. As we walked along the railway tracks to the station, the amiable customs officer told me that he had graduated from the Peking Foreign Languages Institute, that the emblem on the station building consisted of the stylised elements of the word "worker" and symbolised the working class, and that since my first visit in 1958 "everything in China" had "markedly changed for the better". Peking, he said, was also a very different place. A Palace of the National People's Congress and a History Museum, new and wonderful buildings I had yet to see, were up in Tien An Men Square.

I said I was naturally eager to see the new square and the new buildings, as well as the other "sweeping changes" and what effect these had had on life in China.

As we approached the station, the customs man fell silent, but at the time I did not give it a second thought.

The waiting room looked like a second-rate cinema lobby. It had a plaster bust of Mao Tse-tung set against the red velvet covering the wall. Tea was then handed round, and a good thing, too, for the room was being heated most sparingly, if at all (in fact, after my warm Moscow flat, I was to find the unheated or poorly heated buildings very cold in wintertime). In the middle of the room, there was a long ceremonial table with pamphlets and magazines.

"Anti-Soviet stuff most probably," said one of my companions. I paged through a few and found that he had been quite right.

After hours of waiting, we were told that it was time for us to return to the train.

It was already dark when the train started on its way across China. I turned in early so as to be up at daybreak and do some window gazing.

Next morning, we saw a very different landscape from the one we had seen when crossing Mongolia. The gently rolling plains had given way to North China's loess plateau, about which much has been written. The train was winding its way along a river valley, sometimes very close to the cliffside. Deep

rugged canyons cut through the yellow soil, which looked more like compressed dust. The parched and barren soil with a withered tree here and there and the dry river beds all spoke of a severe drought. The dead winter fields with scarcely a human being in sight looked dismal. The only signs of man's presence were the wisps of smoke rising from the chimneys of the mud-huts sheltering from the wind deep down in the canyons or the cave dwellings cut in their sides and clustered into what looked like honeycombs. An occasional two-wheeled slanting cart drawn by horse, mule or donkey wended its way along the unusually narrow roads.

To break the long and tiring trip across the expanses of Asia, we got out to limber up at every stop only to find the platforms empty, for no outsiders were allowed to come near the train.

As the train neared Peking, it had to wind its way among yellow-brownish hills, parched and bleak. Short tunnels ended in dead ends so that front and rear cars changed places. At last we broke away into the open, and there ahead of us lay Peking. The music on the radio became most solemn. The train sped through the suburbs and rolled into Peking Station, a recently built spacious structure with the city's first escalator leading up to the first floor.

The Chinese take pride in the Peking Station as well as in all the splendid buildings that went up in the years of hunger and hardship. Its platform, like those of the way-stations, was all but empty. We were met by a group of fellow trainees, and embassy and consulate officials, some of whom we had known back in Moscow or in college, and this gave us a feeling of warmth and a sense of joy. Representatives of the Chinese universities we were to stay at were also there.

Dozens of pairs of curious Chinese eyes were staring at us from behind the huge window-panes of the first-floor waiting room. Chinese passengers even stopped to look us over in the glass-covered gallery leading to the distant platforms. We couldn't help feeling like exhibits.

"Where else are they to see a foreigner?" said an embassy official noting my embarrassment.

The formalities at the check-point for foreigners took no more than a few minutes, and we were out in the square, where the university representatives sorted us out into cars. Lida, one of our trainees, and myself were packed into a battered baby-car of European make together with the driver and two other Chinese. I found myself next to a young Chinese with

somewhat rough-hewn features, who told me his name was Ma, that he came from the town of Chinghua in the southern province of Chekiang, and that he was to be my futao. The word is hard to translate and means that he was to be my consultant, to help me along in my contacts with people and institutions, live in the same room, talk with me on any subject and help me to arrange my studies and everyday life, in short, he was always to be at my side. This was good news, for now I would at last have a chance to improve my vernacular. It was, of course, a pity that Ma came from Chekiang, because the local dialect falls far short of the standard Chinese, but he had lived in Peking for more than 10 years and spoke very well. He laughed and told me that the previous autumn he had been to see his relatives and had relapsed into dialect.

The other girl in the car, named Lin, was to be Lida's futao. She was from Nanking and her features were much softer than those of Ma. She was pretty and appeared to be very intelligent. Aware that she was attractive, Lin had a proud and distant air, so that at first I even had the impression that she was not very well disposed towards us, but happily I turned out to be wrong.

The Pedagogical University stood in the Outer Street of the New Breach, so named after one of the breaches in the massive walls which run in a quadrangle around old Peking, the four sides facing the four cardinal points. After Peking became the capital in 1949, it expanded far beyond the walled city, and the old gates no longer met the city's needs, so that new breaches had to be made in the walls. The University was moved from the city centre to its present site after 1949. When we arrived, some of its buildings with lecture-halls were yet to be completed and some, like the chemical department, were for the time being located in various lanes, called hutungs. The main entrance was also yet to be completed, and its layout was somewhat odd: it jutted out towards a six-storeyed administrative building.

The car passed through the southern side entrance and followed a narrow asphalt drive up to a panel with slogans and a hovering profile of Mao Tse-tung. Turning off, the car ran through a maze of lanes and finally stopped under the concrete porch-roof of a four-storeyed grey-brick building. Near the entrance stood a group of first-year Vietnamese students.

My room was on the first floor, next door to the Foreign Students' Office. It was long and rectangular and had a

cement floor and a high window. Only the first frame was glazed, while the second was fitted with a fine wire netting to keep out the mosquitoes, Ma told me. There was a strong draught from the window, but the four-loop radiator was heated only mornings and evenings, so that the temperature changed sharply twice a day. Although I longed for my warm Moscow flat, I never complained, realising that the Vietnamese' hostel was probably heated with particular care while the Chinese students' own hostels were very likely not heated at all for the sake of economy. I moved my bed up to the window and my table away from the cold. On the other side of the window stood Ma's bed and table, and by the door we had a bookstand on his side and a wardrobe on mine. Much of the wall plaster had peeled off and there were many holes left by the nails and drawing pins of earlier lodgers.

A very short, elderly man, who moved about in an odd, sidling way, soon came into the room. He introduced himself as Wang and said he was on the staff of the Foreign Students' Office. Ma hastened to tell me that Comrade Wang was the equipment officer. Wang asked me whether there was anything else I wanted. Giving the room a quick glance, I asked for a desk-lamp. As I found out later, even foreigners were not entitled to the luxury of a lamp, but even though he had to go through a lot of trouble, Wang finally got me one.

When we first met, I asked Wang to write down his name and surname, which is common usage in China. His clumsy characters betrayed his poor schooling.

In the talk we then had, Wang told me that he came from Manchuria, had taken part in the guerilla war, and had later fought in the People's Liberation Army. He had had very little schooling, could just read and write, and valued his job most of all. He had no children, for he and his wife had denied themselves any children out of loyalty to the policy of population control. I liked Wang for his simplicity, and he, for his part, was very obliging and kind to me from the start. Like all common people, he had a good knowledge of the Chinese classical stage and, whenever there was no one close around, liked to have a talk about it.

The room next to mine was occupied by Bac Ninh, a student from Vietnam. We met the very first day and he was very friendly, so that we got to know each other quite well. He was a teacher of Chinese at Hanoi University and had come to Peking for a two-year refresher course. Three Chinese teachers took turns in giving him lessons in his own room, making

constant use of a tape-recorder to help him polish up his pronunciation. In his spare time, Bac liked to play the guitar or some national instrument, and hummed the tune as he did so. Other Vietnamese came down to his room from the second and third floors, and when I passed along the corridor, I often heard snatches of Soviet songs, which they whistled or sang in Vietnamese.

Any foreigner would find the conditions I was living in most unusual: one never had a chance to be alone. There was always someone about, so that one always had to smile, to be deliberately polite, and to keep oneself in check. Solitude came only in one's sleep.

The hostel was a solid new building, but it was by no means a place for solitude or reflection: anyone living there was always in the public eye. Even the wall along which my futao's bed stood had a rectangular recess opening into the next room with a bookshelf fitted into it. However, you could see through the slits and anyone in the next room could apparently hear every word being said in our own. Our room was no exception, for all the other students lived in similar conditions. My first impression of all-pervasive mutual mistrust and nervous suspicion soon proved to be correct, but it was some time before I realised that in China spying and informing on each other had become part of the natural order of things.

People feared being suspected of withholding something and brought up all kinds of personal and other matters for debate at public meetings.

My neighbours to the left, whom I went to meet right away, turned out to be young men on the staff of the Foreign Students' Office. They received me with the usual Chinese ceremony, and spoke of the weather and national customs. In a few days, however, I found that the inmates of that room kept changing: hardly anyone slept there two nights in a row. It was apparently something like a guard room. What with the recess in the wall, this kind of company was not what you might call pleasant, but I tried to reassure myself by saying that the arrangement was due to their mistrust of each other rather than of me.

I was keen to meet some native inhabitants of Peking, whose pronunciation has a rare sort of natural ease about it. The Office was quite ready to help me, but could do nothing: the Peking Pedagogical University did not seem to have any Peking-born teachers and all those I was being introduced to

came from provinces all over China. Their speech was, of course, very good, but somewhat deliberate and colourless whenever they watched what they were saying, and hard for a foreigner to understand whenever they slipped into their native dialect. The Peking dialect which these men from various parts of the country used among themselves was richly flavoured with army jargon; typical words like "attack", "assault", "strike out", "mobilise" and "fight" were in common use. When used in everyday life, brash appeals and high-flown phrases had an odd ring about them and verged on the ridiculous.

On the day of our arrival, we were given an official supper which we found much too plentiful, for after our long journey we were all sleepy. In the evening and the next day we were taken by some officials over the University grounds, shown the gardens and the greenhouses, the creche, the nursery school and the library. We were also given a medical check-up at the dispensary. During the eye test, I was surprised at the low standards required.

Twice a day we were taken out on pleasant sight-seeing tours to parks and museums, or to theatres, soirées and receptions. The Chinese are past masters at entertaining guests. Even for us common students the arrangements were perfect.

One fine February day we were taken to see the Temple of Heaven, a marvellous sight in the sunlight. We spent another morning at the Kukung Museum of Ancient Palaces, but managed to see no more than half of it. We spent two days at the grand History Museum in Tien An Men Square. After that, we were taken to the splendid Palace of the National People's Congress across the square.

In the palace lobby, the keeper invited us to sit down on a leather sofa and went to telephone his superior.

"What may I show the Soviet visitors?" he shouted into the receiver, for it never occurred to him that we might just understand him. "I think there is no need to show them the Tibet and Sinkiang halls!"

After a pause, he repeated in a military manner:

"Right! Not to open the halls of Tibet and Sinkiang, and also Taiwan, Heilungkiang and Inner Mongolia. Right!"

Replacing the receiver, he paced grandly across the lobby and invited us into the halls. He was once again most polite and obliging. We were taken through several halls with some of the best exhibits of modern applied art, but the first things we were shown everywhere were Chairman Mao's busts, portraits, and sayings.

Lida and I were allowed a fortnight to settle down, and were then invited to the Office to discuss our study plan.

In the reception-room, which was the same floor as our rooms, we were met by a lady, Comrade Chao, the head of the Office. We thanked her for the arrangements and for the welcome we had been given, and went on to polite mutual probings. Comrade Chao told us that she was an old Party member and had long lived in Yen-an, the CPC leadership's famous headquarters during the anti-Japanese war.

"Office Head Chao is an old revolutionary fighter," my futao dropped a flattering remark.

"Oh no, I am just a simple old woman," Chao modestly objected.

Still, it turned out that her grandson attended the nursery school at Pei-hai—an exclusive nursery school for the children of old and merited Party and government workers. This model nursery school is located in one of Peking's most ancient palaces overlooking the Central Park lake, and has been amply described by Western journalists, who are invariably taken to see it.

We then went on to discuss our study plan. This being Lida's first visit to China, she was somewhat shy and reluctant to speak Chinese, but her studies were soon arranged, whereas I was in for some trouble. It turned out that I had come to China all but by mistake. I had studied medieval Chinese stories, short novels and folklore for eight years, but the Chinese translator of my papers had translated "belles-lettres" as "san-wen" (instead of "hsiaoshuo"), which means lofty-style classical prose: historical works, essays, and epistolary writings. I was naturally upset and tried to object. Chao heard me out and said in cold tones:

"The ancient stories and short novels you specialise in are bad writings, their ideology is corrupt, they are not studied at this University and no one will agree to act as your tutor."

I had good reason to object, for I knew that the late Professor Wang Ku-lu, the leading expert on the subject, had worked at Peking University until he died. It was hard to believe that he had left no followers.

But Chao was firm:

"At present we have no one dealing with these bad writings. Had we known they were your speciality, we could not have admitted you at all."

Chao's blunt threat at once had a sobering effect on me. Indeed, the slip in translation could provide a perfect pretext

for sending me back to Moscow without much ado. A fortnight in China was no bad thing in itself, but since I wanted to work, I humbly asked Chao what she could suggest.

She thought for a moment and said that the best thing for me to do was to take up the history of "sanwen" and ancient Chinese with Professor Kuo. I had read some scientific articles by the Professor, who was a well-known scientist of the middle generation. I would be quite happy to study under such a prominent specialist, but said that I wanted time to think it over. On second thoughts I realised that the inaccuracy in the translation had done me a good turn, and was thankful.

My consent seemed to mollify Chao, who thought it a sensible decision, so that our second meeting was much more congenial. She insisted on a programme of studies drawn up for me by the Chinese, and I accepted. This time I did not insist, but merely asked to be allowed to do some research on my own on a subject I had studied for years. It was Chao's turn to say she wanted time to think it over.

At our third meeting, I was introduced to Professor Kuo. He was Deputy-Dean of the Philological Department and was in effect in charge of all the literary studies, for the Dean himself was a linguist, while the other deputy, whom I was yet to meet, was not a scholar but a Party functionary. I was happy to hear that Professor Kuo was a northerner, which made it easy for me to understand his speech. I gave him some reprints of my articles, whose titles Ma and I had very carefully translated the night before. Professor Kuo appeared to have a good impression of my articles, and told me quite a few pleasant things. The Office people were also beginning to view me with relatively less bias, stiffness and suspicion.

At our fourth meeting, Professor Kuo solemnly announced that the Administration was prepared, "wherever possible", to supply me with "hsiaoshuo" material for individual study. The consultations I had asked for were not even mentioned—I was not to have any—but anyway that was a step towards meeting my request. Professor Kuo, a real scientist, had obviously had a say in the decision. I thanked him, significantly emphasising that I was fairly well prepared for work on the topic and could do without any Chinese consultations. Professor Kuo said nothing in answer to my hint, but at one of our sessions some two months later he told me that he was also willing to give me consultations on the medieval story. Alas, his first consultation on the subject turned out to be the last.

At one of our meetings, Professor Kuo explained why the medieval stories were so harmful: it was because they "propagated the thesis that love was man's supreme experience", a very bad and reactionary idea. Love, he said, was an opiate for the young, "diverting them from revolution". The idea, expressed by a thinking man, was so absurd and preposterous that I smiled and said:

"You seem to take me for a callow youth, but I've already been working for eight years, am long married, and have two children. Love stories cannot possibly deprave me. Is it that I look too young?"

Professor Kuo was obviously embarrassed and his whole demeanour showed that he had nothing to do with such hypocritical nonsense and was saying it only because he had to. Seeing that, I, too, was put out, for I realised that I had made a tactless remark, because he obviously knew full well what was what.

My studies with Professor Kuo were proceeding at a measured pace. True, my research did not benefit directly, but I found them very useful for my education as a specialist. I made sure that there were no breaks in our studies, and sometimes asked for additional hours. Professor Kuo was always willing to oblige, so that our talks often lasted all of four, instead of two, hours. He was no formalist.

But his loyalty was impeccable. I knew from Biletairé, a Swiss student at the University, that many collections and research writings on classical literature had been effectively banned. Such books were published in just a few copies classified for "restricted use", and were unavailable for foreigners or the general public. I asked Kuo about some writings I knew, but he always gave me an evasive official answer.

Thus, I made extensive use of a catalogue of magazine and newspaper articles on ancient Chinese culture for 1911-49, but a similar catalogue for the following years was, oddly enough, classified "for restricted use", although it was nothing but a list of articles published in the PRC. I asked Professor Kuo for an explanation, but he said in an official voice that the catalogue was of too low a quality to be published for general use.

I realised, of course, that he had sound political reasons for saying what he did, reasons connected with the clamp-down on the old Chinese culture and traditions. Subsequent developments bore out my suspicions.

Returning from a lesson one day, I approached Ma on the question of the foreigners' peculiar status in his country. It was already a month since I had arrived in China, but apart from himself and other officials no one had yet talked with me. It was a pity to be in the country without meeting the Chinese, speaking their language or hearing them speak.

"It is quite enough that you talk to me and Comrade Kuo," he replied. "Besides, you can also listen to the radio."

"Why is it forbidden to talk with foreigners?" I asked him bluntly.

He was evasive:

"We Chinese are very polite. It is simply that people don't want to bother you with their talk."

"But that's a misunderstanding!" I insisted. "I've also come to practice my vernacular, and I want someone else besides you and Comrade Kuo. Could I, perhaps, attend lectures?"

"The level of your knowledge is too high for that," he declared, blending refusal and compliment in the best style.

"Knowledge is not what I mean. What I really need is to hear the lecturer speak Chinese."

"We shall discuss this question."

In March I was finally allowed to join the Chinese fifth-year students in attending lectures on the history of literature. The lectures on the Yuan period, when China was ruled by Genghis Khan's descendants who had invaded the country, were particularly interesting. The lecturers paid tribute to Mao's "thought", vulgar sociology and nationalism, but, as I was to realise later, such tribute was not then particularly irksome. It was much more important that wonderful passages were being read out and explained at these lectures, and the students were taught to respect the talents of the past and given an idea of real literature.

The students' response was lively, they were attentive and acted naturally. They were always very much excited at the slightest hint of any connection between the lecture and China's contemporary literature and realities.

Once lecturer Li, telling us about the period of Mongolian rule, said without hedging:

"At that time, the situation in the country was very complicated, the political and class struggle was complicated, and literature was also complicated and... rich!"

The lecturer's final word, which he uttered after a meaningful pause, had the effect of an electric discharge: the students began whispering to each other and smiling, as if they

were in on some secret. I do not think that any of them had the slightest idea that the "cultural revolution" was only two months away.

Books and scientific magazines were now being brought to me from the library. The heavy bound files had dust on them, and the borrowers' cards had turned yellow but had no entries at all.

When handing these over, Ma always reminded me that these magazines, which had been published before Liberation, were extremely "bad". By now I knew that a lot more was being done for me than for the Chinese themselves, who would never have been given any magazines of this kind. Still, there was a closed fund that I, too, was denied. I soon realised that it was best to order long lists of books, because usually only about 10 per cent of my orders were met.

I was also allowed to visit the library at Peking University. True, the formalities were somewhat cumbersome: I filed an application for the book I needed, which my futao took to Professor Kuo, and, having secured his signature, went on to the Office, where they filled out an official form to be duly signed and stamped. Given good-will all around, the whole procedure took no less than a fortnight.

After this, Ma and I would take the official letter to the library at Peking University and the following day I would have my books. The books mentioned in the letter were the only ones I could get, so that it was not for me to pick and choose. When the books were finally on my table, my futao showed a keen interest in them. He had graduated as a teacher and had done post-graduate research on ancient Chinese, but had never yet set eyes upon the old originals, for he and his like, to say nothing of the ordinary student or the everyday man, had no access at all to these "bad" books. Before Liberation, the monuments of ancient Chinese culture, which were considered a treasure, had for ages belonged to a select few, but after Liberation first some, and then more and more of these were being declared "bad" and locked up as banned. It seemed that someone was trying to put the lid on the past as a whole.

Lectures, the reading of ancient sources, and studies with Professor Kuo took up most of my time, so that I found it hard to get away for an hour's book-shopping. Still, in the first few months, I was fortunate enough to buy a few hundred books from the second-hand book-shops. It was not often that I had

a day off, but when I did, I spent hours at the long shelves packed with grey-and-yellowing volumes. I used to go down to the book-shop in Liulichang Street, which had a long, cold and always empty hall lit with luminescent lamps, where the shop assistants warmed themselves around braziers. I would be given a chair and left to rummage among the volumes. It was not often that a fresh volume was added to the display, and the main thing for me now was to get hold of the books that were still there. Books were expensive, and cost two or three times as much as those in the Soviet Union, so that although I got mine at a discount I found these slicing my meagre budget.

I was in high spirits because my work was off to a good start. I liked to see the growing rows of books on my shelves, and soon had to ask Wang to get me another bookstand, which he kindly did.

The glow of satisfaction tends to put a man off his guard, and being in high spirits one fine morning I asked Ma:

"This is my second month in China, but I can't see why our two socialist countries cannot get along together..."

At that the calm and cordial Ma suddenly flew into a rage: lips twitching, fists clenched, he was up on his feet and shouting at me:

"You have betrayed the revolution and China! Your aid is fictitious, it is a downright fraud! You can't bribe or swindle us! We will never come to terms with any revisionists or have anything to do with them! We are poor but we are making revolution, and not selling it for the sake of 'universal welfare'."

I stood aghast at this outburst of hatred. Of course, I had long seen such demagoguery in the Chinese press, but it is one thing to see it in print—newsprint will stand anything—and quite another to hear it from your room-mate. True, he spoke in terms that were lifted wholesale from the newspapers of the day. I realised very well that "betrayal of the revolution" and the other high-sounding slanderous terms the Peking leaders were daily mouthing amounted to no more than a red herring to draw the Chinese away from visions of a better life. This kind of policy required a whipping up of anti-Soviet hysteria, which is why the Peking leaders regarded any step towards a settlement of Soviet-Chinese relations as a stab at their policy. Chinese propaganda insisted that the hunger and privation inflicted on the Chinese people by Mao's adventurist line were caused by the break-up of the two countries' friendly rela-

tions through the Soviet Union's fault. That was certainly shifting the blame with a vengeance, a trick as old as the hills. Nothing at all was being said about the many years of the Soviet Union's large-scale assistance to China.

Ma's angry speech ran on like a newspaper article: he did not use a single word of his own. The show of hysterical emotion must have also been prescribed from above.

To hear a man I had come to like going on in this wild way was a painful experience and had the effect of a cold shower, at once putting things in the right perspective. It was the first lesson I had, a lesson I was unlikely to forget.

As he paused to take breath, I told him calmly:

"I mentioned our two countries' friendship without thinking it would insult you."

This had a sobering effect on Ma and, gradually calming down, he said:

"We in China had for a long time held up the Soviet Union as an example to our people. Now the Soviet Union can no longer be our model. Our future will be a different one. We are the true revolutionaries. The revolution will last for ever!"

"I have recently read an article in an Albanian newspaper," I said, "which held forth about who is and who isn't fit to run the USSR. But this amounts to gross interference in our affairs and is hardly likely to help re-establish relations between us."

Ma plunged into another beaten exposition of Chinese propaganda tenets.

There was no sense in going on in this vein. I said it was time for breakfast and left the room. On my way to the dining-hall, I was thinking of what had just happened. I wondered how I could find out what was really on Ma's mind. Could a man speak out frankly when there was a tape-recorder just the other side of the wall? Of course, not. The tape-recorder was there above all to keep track of his loyalty, for they already had a fair idea about my attitude to their official dogma. That being so, Ma's outburst must have been meant chiefly to ensure his own self-preservation. After that incident, I became much more circumspect and, wherever possible, tried to avoid political topics.

About six weeks after our arrival, Ma told me:

"Deputy-Dean Comrade Liu will receive you and Comrade Lida. He wants to talk to you about your life and studies. He could not see you earlier because he was very busy."

I asked him about Comrade Liu's speciality and his scientific writings.

"He is a political functionary, an old revolutionary, but he is well conversant with science and culture."

I was reminded of Chen, a political functionary I had known in Moscow back in 1959. After Liberation, this short man with thin hair was put in charge of the Chinese film industry. He soon got to know the workings of the business, acquired a really good knowledge of the arts, and wrote many articles. For me he epitomised the man who had rapidly developed and gained in spiritual stature in a totally new field of endeavour. He had got high blood pressure from overwork and had to stay day after day in his Moscow hotel room. I used to bring the doctors along and have long talks with him, for Chen was unaffected and easy to approach.

Liu received us at the appointed hour, a good omen in itself. In a smoke-filled room, furnished like an ordinary lecture room, we saw an elderly man of medium height, thick-set and stocky in a peasant way, with emphatic and abrupt movements, greying hair and large, yellowish and widely spaced teeth. He invited us to sit down in arm-chairs and, apparently out of habit, continued to pace the floor. Since I was already used to Chinese ways, I was surprised at his manner: in decorum-conscious China, it was only a man who felt himself to be complete master that could allow himself to receive visitors, especially foreign visitors, in that way.

I tried to make the most use of any official meetings of this kind, putting forward various proposals and asking questions. When I asked Liu about his own scientific work, he sought to show his erudition by using long words. But although a leading man at the Philological Department, he had no knowing of literature at all. His knowledge of the Chinese novel, *Dream in the Red Chamber*, was confined to the titles of the plays he had seen at the theatre (Chinese classical novels are traditionally turned into plays). To win his favour I addressed him as a fellow-scientist.

"You realise, of course," I said, "that a scientist cannot work without originals, for he is a researcher."

"But why analyse 'the bad'?" he countered and gave me a smile to show that he quite understood. "Mao Tse-tung teaches us...." A quotation followed.

"Here in China I have not started on any new line of research, but have continued in my old one. I have been using

books you yourself published back in 1958. Since then, the situation in China has changed...."

"Yes, it has!" he gladly agreed, for after all it was unbecoming to disagree on every point.

"The situation in China has been changing rapidly," I continued, "but I have yet to complete my work. In choosing my sources, I do not divide them into good and bad but read those that are not available in the USSR."

Liu finally agreed to look into my request. Lida was less fortunate: she asked for lessons in modern conversational Chinese, but Liu refused her on the plea that they did not have that kind of specialist. That was only a pretext, because Bac Ninh was being taught by one.

"Any Chinese could speak to her. Comrade Ma, for instance," I said pointing to my futao. "We are indeed short of conversational practice."

Instead of giving a straightforward answer, Liu suddenly started off on a fashionable topic: "Not to be afraid of any difficulties, not to fear death", a topic which throughout the spring had run in the Chinese press like a refrain. I was irritated by this verbal heroism, which constantly required whipping up with monotonous incantation slogans, so I explained to him that Soviet people were not afraid of any difficulties.

"It's ridiculous to urge diligence on those who have mastered thousands of Chinese characters. That is not an easy thing to do for you Chinese, but for us foreigners it is even harder. We've chosen a hard trade and know how to work."

All this was quite true, but I was not used to boasting in public and felt highly ill at ease. It appeared, in fact, that Liu had made me talk in an alien strain.

He wished us every success and said:

"You work well, but one should also know how to rest. Mao Tse-tung teaches us that we must not only work but also rest, go in for sport...."

Lida and I left the smoke-filled room to the sound of quotations from Mao.

Having found it impossible to arrange for her studies, Lida soon obtained a transfer to the Institute of Language so as to study under a fixed student programme.

In China, we came to relish the most everyday events. Every Thursday, we went down to the Soviet Embassy to see Soviet films and papers. The papers, though none too fresh, were a great pleasure to read and used to be snapped up immediately,

and the old films being shown at the Embassy club were an equal delight, even those we had already seen in Moscow.

Once a week I went to see my fellow-trainees at the Institute of Language on the western outskirts of Peking. All its students were foreigners, and admittance procedures to the Institute were laxer than at any other place.

One April night, my friend Leonid and I were roaming the streets of Peking. We could not see each other very often, and were always glad to meet; this was particularly true of me, because after Lida had been transferred to the Institute of Language I was left all alone at the Pedagogical University. As we chatted along, a man suddenly stepped out of the darkness and stopped in front of us. He was quite young, but pale and thin. Choosing his words with difficulty, he said in Russian:

"Are you Soviet?"

We answered him in Chinese, pleased to find that at least one of Peking's teeming inhabitants had at last decided to speak to us. He said his name was Li. It was getting late, so we agreed to meet him another day to have a good talk about things of common interest.

We met a week later and had a long walk. His faded, much-washed clothes spoke of his poverty. We strode along the streets without arousing any suspicion: the passers-by took him for the regular foreigner's escort. Indeed, Li was our escort, but one not provided for by the rules.

I got a much deeper insight into Chinese life from the young man's story than from anything I had seen as a casual observer.

Li had already done two years at the People's University when he was imprudent enough to express in a corridor talk his dissatisfaction with Mao's political line. He was officially denounced, expelled from the University, and subjected to re-education. Perhaps that was why he was a case of early hypertension with failing eyesight. Now that he was out of the hospital, manual work was his lot: he had been sent down for re-education, to build brick cattle-sheds and warehouses. He had to travel clear across the city, from West to East, and then on by suburban train, which was very tiring and expensive, so that he lived all week long in a workers' hostel, among men who thought him to be a dangerous "state" criminal. Late on Saturday night he came to spend Sunday with his mother. A month of hard work earned him no more than 22 yuan. To make this clear let me say that to lead anything like a tolerable life (in Chinese terms) one had to earn at least

40 yuan. Besides, the sick intellectual felt himself to be an outcast.

"We are now at the height of the 'four purges' movement¹—political purges, of course," he told me. "Twice a week, after working hours, we have to attend meetings, which drag on forever, since everyone is keen to show his purity. It is safer to speak out, but I try to keep quiet, and come forward only when I find the Party secretary's eye on me. I'm tired. For us, Chinese intellectuals, Mao's personality cult is a bitter and distressing thing, weighing heavy on our hearts."

He kept repeating these sad words.

"There was a time when it would have been impossible even to imagine the things that are happening now. The cult is what's oppressing and ruining China. Marxism, Leninism and the people have been abandoned for the sake of the cult, and this weighs heavy on the hearts of honest and thinking men."

Li spoke of the terrible spiritual emptiness. So as not to go to seed altogether, he had taken up the study of Makarenko, the well-known Soviet educator.

"Makarenko also re-educated people, but he did so by uplifting them! Chinese education and re-education are something quite different: their whole point is not to uplift a man in spirit, but to suppress him, to make him dumb and humble. It is not the people that are being raised to the level of the intelligentsia but, on the contrary, the old intelligentsia that is being pressed down and driven under."

"Aren't you a bit too pessimistic?" I asked cautiously. "After all, thousands of people in China have been getting an education."

"These cannot be described as intellectuals, for they don't know how to think," he answered. "They cannot do the country much good, but are quite capable of putting down those who think, and will surely do so. A man who has become literate and has gained a few scraps of knowledge is still a long way from being an intellectual: he has yet to learn how to think, and that's not so easy. Every school-leaver here is considered an intellectual. But none can, let alone want to think. Why should they? At the meetings, they have but to rehearse the same phrases, trembling for some slip of the tongue. What

¹The movement was launched during the period of open polemics with the CPSU, as a general "purge" of political, ideological and economic "sins", and undesirable men. In the course of the movement, bribe-takers and office-seekers were removed from their posts, but its main edge was aimed against those who sympathised with the Soviet Union.

a dulling exercise! Then there is also the rehearsal of Mao's writings: we have to go over a small article five or even ten times, till we feel stupid, repeating every sentence over and over again."

"What about the workers? The men you work with, what do they think?"

"Many of them have been duped into believing Mao Tse-tung. The workers believe all those who have been convicted to be traitors and counter-revolutionaries. They think I'm crazy."

He seemed to know what I was thinking—the reasons behind all this—and went on to say:

"A lot of good was done after Liberation, especially before 1957. In 1958, things already began to go awry, and then downright disaster was upon us. You must be aware that our leaders later blamed the Soviet Union for the famine of the following two years."

"That's not true!" I joined in hotly. "The USSR was helping China to industrialise, sometimes even to its own disadvantage...."

"I know the Soviet Union has been slandered, but for what purpose? Why isolate China? What is the reason behind this? There is a great deal I don't understand, but whenever I try to think hard, the mind boggles."

We walked on in silence for some time. Suddenly he broke out with real emotion:

"Do you think the US imperialists will attack China?"

"Hardly," I answered, "after all, China's present policy suits them very well."

"That's what I think, too. I merely wanted to talk it over with someone, but there is no one I can talk to. Our leaders don't want to join the USSR in helping Vietnam, but would like to use a Vietnam victory against the USSR. But since you have been helping Vietnam, they will be unable to do so. That is why there will be no united action. Over here, they are prepared to defile any proposal if it comes from the USSR."

"It is indeed a great misfortune that our countries are divided," I said, "for otherwise, I think, the Americans would never have dared to start their aggression in Vietnam."

"Perhaps," he wearily agreed, and went back to the personality cult and the economic mistakes. He told that people were taking their country's troubles very close to heart, and that his own father, an economist, had not survived the tragic mistakes of the 1960s and had died of grief, even though he had not been persecuted.

From time to time, Li would recall that he was meant to be my guide and would start talking about Peking. To tell the truth, however, he did not know much about the past.

I met him on two other occasions. Shortly before May Day, Li told me that we were to meet in a fortnight, after the holidays, but he never came and I never saw him again. Was it that he did not want to take any risks? Or had he told me everything he had wanted to? Or had he been spotted and was now unable to go anywhere at all? That is something I shall never know.

I began going to the cinema—not so much for the entertainment, as to hear fluent Chinese speech.

The Chinese are as sensitive to beauty as any nation in the world. I was told that when a really humane and romantic film, *Early One Spring, in February*—a film of genuine artistic merit—had been on in Peking, the cinemas had been overcrowded. I did not see the film myself; it had been denounced and banned.

But whatever one's attitude to the Chinese screen, it is the only screen there is for hundreds of millions of Chinese. There is nothing else for them to see: foreign films are simply not played.

One film I saw, for instance, *The Underground War*, was a "good" film, that is, it was well in line with propaganda requirements. The cast included some good and familiar actors, who had for years played in wartime adventure films; the characters and the plot (with the anti-Japanese war as its setting) were also familiar. The film could well have been described as a comedy but for its perfectly serious purposes. The war it depicted was a toy affair, merry and rollicking. The enemies, Japanese soldiers, were being knocked off like so many tin soldiers. They were being stabbed, clubbed, speared and stoned to death, blasted with mines, dragged into trenches, decoyed into holes, knifed, cut, pierced and shot, while the shapes clad in Japanese uniform sbook in their boots, yelped, screamed their heads off, jumped about and dropped dead. The guerilla war was presented as child's play, in the course of which the heroes had the knack of springing up from underground loess passages in the most unexpected places and without a speck of dust on them, as the custom is in films of derring-do. The message of that film was that the people's war in the subterranean passages had been a fine, victorious thing. The film abounded in full-frame stills of quotations from Mao Tse-tung, with his "optimistic" view of people's wars.

What struck the eye was the absence of any humane emotions, with much bloodshed and agony in their stead. One close-up showed a Japanese being speared to death: eyes boggling, he writhes in pain and gives up the ghost. In another scene, children go about finishing off wounded enemies: as soon as a shell-shocked Japanese tries to raise his head, up comes a young hero and knocks him one on the bean. Another Japanese cannot even move but merely emits a feeble moan, and the children promptly put him out of his misery. That is, of course, very funny, but to enjoy the fun one needs a pretty strong set of nerves and a habit for everyday cruelty.

There were many young people in the hall, and they were delighted with the film and enjoyed themselves tremendously. But those who were older and had gone through the war against Japan behaved with reserve, for they knew that the war had been no joke.

On the way out, I asked an elderly Chinese whether he had taken part in the war of liberation.

"Yes," he answered, giving me and my futao Ma a close look.

"Was it like that at all?"

"Not particularly," he said, but quickly added: "In the places where I myself fought it was somewhat different."

Ma promptly summed up the film's message:

"This is a real film. It teaches us that war is nothing to be afraid of. The people's war is invincible. It is only the revisionists who depict the horrors of war. Our film shows that the people do not fear war."

I usually watched Chinese films on the TV on my own floor, together with employees of the Office, sometimes at cinemas in the city, and every Saturday, in the Northern Dining-Hall, which after supper was turned into a cinema for the students. The tickets were only half the price current in the city, while the Vietnamese and myself were allowed in as guests, free of charge. The shows were organised by the local trade-union committee, while the student union sent in the attendants. The viewers had to bring in their own chairs, with the Chinese usually coming in with squat stools, and us foreigners lugging along heavy backed chairs.

The students used to give us a warm welcome, leaving an empty space for us in the centre. True, the Vietnamese did not come very often, and when the lights went out, the Chinese students would rise in a body and move into the empty space,

clattering with their stools. Ma naturally always came along with me and tried to prevent anyone from talking to me. But I usually sat down at the end of a row, so that in the dark students would often come to sit beside me and talk to me in a friendly way. One day, when the lights went out, a girl who had come to see the film with her mother, a teacher at the University, moved up closer to the screen and found herself beside me.

"You are Soviet, aren't you? You must find these films very strange!" she exclaimed with some naiveté.

Her mother at once checked her and whispered:

"Watch out, he's not alone."

As a curtain-raiser, the students were usually shown slides with Mao's sayings, which had nothing to do with the film itself. Then there was a short documentary or popular-science film. Some of these were quite amusing, like the one about a national contest of workers in the services, where cooks chopped vegetables and made Chinese meat dumplings with incredible speed, butchers dressed carcasses, and shop assistants arranged goods for sale. Another short was about the electrification of the countryside, showing various accidents as a warning to the unwary.

Just before the main feature, there was another slide with Mao's sayings on a red background, this time to match the topic of the film.

Here I saw, for instance, the *Red Basket*, a film which was issued in early 1966 and stayed on throughout the "cultural revolution" because it pleased the hungweipings. The hero heaves up onto his back a basket with goods and foodstuffs, like oil, and trudges out into the mountains to peddle them off. There are very few scenes in which Chairman Mao is not mentioned in one way or another.

The pedlar keeps recalling Mao's statements, and learns by heart whole volumes of his writings or collected quotations. "Mao thought" is the source of all of the hero's good deeds and the motive force of his whole life. Mao's portrait or bust is present in many scenes. The pedlar says that he has come into the mountains on the spur of Chairman Mao's "ideas", the peasants hail "Chairman Mao's happy epoch", and so on. The young shop-girls are shown as having renounced all private life, and acting as model citizens, "brought up in the Mao Tse-tung epoch". The message here is that the young are better and more loyal than the older generations, and that is undoubtedly one of the reasons for the film's success with the hungweipings.

The film seeks to impress that "Mao Tse-tung thought" is the only way to bring welfare and happiness to the masses.

Those were some of the "good" films, but I saw some "bad" ones as well.

The *Red Sun*, a film made by the well-known producer, Tang Hsiao-tan, at the Tienma film studio, was severely denounced by the press. It depicts the war of liberation, with the enemy fighting in earnest.

Before we foreigners were allowed to see this film, we had to hear a whole lecture about it. Hsui, an Office employee, attended by at least three of his fellows, stopped us in the lane on our way to the dining-hall, invited us to seat ourselves on the chairs we were carrying, and explained to us why the film was harmful. He spoke in the spirit of the press, in well-set clichés:

"The Chinese people achieved their liberation thanks to Chairman Mao's brilliant ideas. In this film you will not see a single portrait or hear a single word of our beloved leader's. This is a malicious distortion and enemy slander of the Chinese Revolution and the People's Liberation Army."

Indeed, one can but marvel at the courage of the producer, who had not inserted a single Mao bust, portrait, or photograph in the film, and had not made any of his heroes utter a single Mao quotation.

I was invited to see the *Red Sun* at our own University for a good reason, and that was because earlier on I had been to Peita, that is, Peking University, to see *Stage Sisters*, another condemned film. In fact, in the spring of 1966 the general impression was that we were being shown none but condemned films and that there simply were no others.

At Peita, the film was shown in the students' dining-hall, a vast hall with two rows of windows, which looked like a hangar. Before the film, the students gave an amateur performance. First there was a choral song about Mao Tse-tung, then a mass dancing scene showing the Vietnamese war against the Americans, and finally the chorus joined the dance group for another eulogy of the leader. The stage-management was excellent, and the presentation quite modern. The girls and young men, every one of them, were all wonderfully handsome and well-shaped in their closely fitting sports suits. To the peals of the anthem in praise of the leader, the dancing students turned their faces towards a giant gilded profile of Mao Tse-tung, which took up the whole backdrop, with just enough space for some red banners on either side. The profile shone against its red background, and the dancers stretched

forth their arms towards the human sun, fell to their knees, made up picturesque groups, and struck different attitudes. The chorus rose to a wild crescendo, producing an electrifying state of ecstasy, which mounted to an inconceivable pitch. As the excitement of general worship mounted, the hall became stifling. The spectacle was akin to a frenzied pagan rite, very colourful and expressive owing to the charm and power of youth; it appeared to have absorbed the ancient worship of the sun, the cult of fire and thunder, and self-oblivion in face of the will of the heavens. The frenzy had the power of a ritual, and it lacked only human blood and human sacrifice to complete the impression. At the time I did not know that a "cultural revolution" would soon be sacrificing its victims on the altar of Mao's personality cult.

The performance was followed by *Stage Sisters*. Even judged on the highest standards, the film is a remarkable success. While it was still on in Peking, it was very hard to get in. In the darkness of the cinema, the audience often broke out in applause, despite the propaganda campaign in the press. At Peking University, however, the students' response was somewhat strange, not to say frightening.

In one episode, a redundant old actress commits suicide. The indignant actors put the blame on the money-grubbing manager, and one of them exclaims: "This is so inhuman!" At this point, the thousand-strong audience of Chinese students roared with laughter. That is not easy to understand, but one must bear in mind that for six years before that the Mao group had been teaching the young to hate things like human kindness, so that the brutal treatment of an old woman simply made the students laugh: for them humanism was a silly idea, long since dispelled by "Chairman Mao's thought".

The producers of the film were guilty of a "monstrous crime": they had presented an honest, vigorous and revolutionary-minded man, who did not even mention the "great leader". The members of the Shanghai underground brought out in the film were also dismissed as being unreal. The critics insisted that since these men had not even mentioned the leader, they were not Communists, and heaped on the film accusations of slander, treason, and so on.

Did Chinese cinema-goers at the time go to see the "good" films, and what did they think about them?

They did go to see them, for there was little else to see, and they were happy to have some entertainment, whatever it was. One of the most stage-conscious people in the world had to

make do with ersatz. Still, even the false, ham-fisted films and plays, full of the Mao cult, could not keep the Chinese away from the cinemas, which were always packed. Besides, there was the new practice of "cultural outings"—group trips to the theatre or the cinema. People preferred to join in, because if anything happened later on, a refusal to go could always be recalled.

Then came the May holidays, and the Office drew up a "plan of festive entertainment". The festivities at the Yihoyuan Park fell on a rainy day. Peking had not had any rain to speak of for something like 18 months, but by now the hardened soil had turned into a soggy mess, so that the dedicated students had to stage their performance—of which we had another generous round—right in the mud.

On a fine sunny day we were taken to the Great Wall and the famous Shisanling storage-lake. Beneath a blue sky, the wall, winding quaintly across the mountains, did not look as if it had been made by human hand. The mountain tops stood out vividly against the clear sky, while the valleys lay in a haze of sand-dust.

The storage-lake, which we circled with much ceremony, had dried up. This had been a people's construction project, with tens of thousands working on it, with Mao Tse-tung himself turning a symbolic spade, but that had not helped: the water had run out, and a small buzzing motor was now pumping the ooze over the majestically towering dam, a monument of wasted effort. The Vietnamese and I strolled along the dam, and I made our Chinese escorts nervous by asking what had happened to the water. They were particularly disturbed when I remarked that although the builders' enthusiasm had been great, there had apparently been a lack of specialist knowledge to make the correct calculations.

After the Shisanling storage-lake we went on to see a magnificent monument of the past, the subterranean palatial tomb of a Ming emperor, recently excavated and now open to the public. The guides started their story by apologising for all the luxury being put on display; it was meant, they said, to help foster a feeling of "class hatred". But curiosity was the only feeling I personally noticed.

On the way back, the Vietnamese began to sing. They started with the songs they had learnt at their lessons of Chinese, songs about Mao, the "reddening East", about unity

and the heroes of war. Suddenly the boy who led the singing turned to me, and shouted:

"And now we shall sing something for you!"

They struck up a Soviet song about Moscow, which was followed by "Katyusha", and then all of them joined in for the "Suburban Moscow Nights", another Soviet favourite. After that, their best man sang the song of the cosmonauts and "Life, I Love You". They ended with "My Vast, My Native Land", rendering the first stanza in Russian.

Our Chinese escorts were utterly confused. They fidgeted and exchanged looks and whispers, but finally seemed to have decided not to interfere. They sat with a distant air, implying that it was unpleasant and painful for them to hear songs of that kind, and indicating that it was tactless to sing these in their presence. Still, when the Vietnamese started singing in Russian, the young Chinese teacher who sat next to me said in Russian in a confidential whisper:

"I understand this, too. I used to learn Russian."

This made me start: up to then we had talked only in Chinese. I glanced at him and saw that he was excited. Although he did not say anything else, I was glad to know that deep down inside him he had remained a friend.

As the bus speeded along, the singing gradually died away, for everyone was very tired. Moving imperceptibly, the Chinese had gradually closed in on me, separating me from the Vietnamese, but I was too tired to react. As I dozed, I watched the teachers and the Office people trying to amuse themselves.

Ma suggested having a meeting for fun. The question that was put up for debate was whether it was the men or the women who had to play the more important part in life.

I do not remember what it was that the first speaker said in defence of the men, but when another came out for the superiority of the women, everyone perked up. This is how his argument ran:

"The girls are better, quicker and more solid than the boys at mastering Chairman Mao's writings. They should have priority."

"Yes, indeed! That's very true!" everyone agreed.

Ma was also of that opinion and said with an easy smile:

"It is because the girls are quicker to adjust their thoughts to the correct line. They are not scatter-brained, but press straight ahead, without deviating from their path."

A Chinese with a pock-marked face sitting next to me agreed with him:

"That's true, the boys often wander about instead of following the straight path, they have fewer settled ideas."

In early May 1966, the Chinese still risked joking about Chairman Mao's "thought".

Two of items on the "holiday entertainment plan" suggested by the Office promised to be interesting: one was attendance at a soirée staged by students of the same course as mine, and the other, the May fireworks display. I was particularly keen to go to the soirée, because even if I had no chance of talking to the students, I wanted to see them making merry.

But the Office cancelled its own invitation because of an attempt at a political assassination in the foreigners' shop. After attending a special briefing on the affair, my futao Ma was so worried that he even requested additional protection for me. I was given a body-guard, Deputy-Chief of the Office Wang, who was the tallest and strongest of all the Office employees (he was no relation of Wang's, the modest equipment officer's—the name is a common one in China). The whole foreign colony in Peking was very much disturbed over the incident. I first heard of it from a young GDR diplomat who had studied in Moscow and had now come to Peking for a refresher course in Chinese. He also spoke perfect Russian. He told me that the attempt had been made against Lusya Malova, the pregnant wife of a GDR embassy official.

Here is how it happened. In the foreigners' shop, where Chinese are not usually allowed, a Chinese stranger suddenly came up to the fair-haired woman from behind and struck out at her with a chopper, aiming his blow at the nape of the neck. But the woman seemed to have sensed the danger: as he struck out, she turned round and this saved her life. The knife slashed her face to the bone. As she collapsed, the man started to kick her. Luckily, he did not manage to get at her belly. All this while, the salesmen and shop assistants looked on placidly at this scene, none of them so much as lifting a finger to help.

The man who rushed to help her was a member of a Mali Government delegation and not some "hero of the Mao Tse-tung epoch", tirelessly fostered in a spirit of Mao's precepts, "to fear no difficulties, to fear no death". The Malian was unarmed, but he took the blows upon himself and saved the woman from certain death. He was wounded. As he fell under the blows, the attacker calmly walked out of the shop. Nor did anyone try to stop him outside, and he was detained only much later.

The PRC's Supreme Court sentenced the villain to death by firing squad. He was said to be a class enemy, but much in his attack remained obscure. How, for instance, had a counter-revolutionary entered the guarded shop, and why was it that no one had asked him what he wanted? There was apparently good reason why a year later the hungweipings accused the Supreme Court of "treason".

When Ma and I got to talking about the case, it turned out that even he had been told only about the wounding of the Malian, but nothing about the pregnant woman.

"This is the first time a foreign friend has been attacked in Peking since Liberation," Ma told me. "It is our fault, for we had forgotten that such a thing was possible. That's why there was such general confusion. But we shall learn this lesson well, and we shall not allow anything of the sort to happen again."

Here Ma reeled off a lecture on the sharpening of the class struggle under socialism. When he was through, I said:

"That's not the point. I think that the attempt in the shop was due to your nationalist propaganda."

At first Ma was taken aback, but then set out to convince me that there was no nationalism of any kind in the PRC.

I insisted that there was, and we wrangled till we were dead-beat, but argument for Ma was a point of duty, and he was not allowed to let me have the last word.

So, the Office decided that it was best for me to stay away from the student soirée, but allowed me to attend the fireworks. I went along with Wang, the Deputy-Chief himself, because I had been invited to watch the fireworks from the stand in the central square of Tien An Men, whereas Ma was admitted only into the square itself. We went by special bus—small, battered and rattling along, but there was plenty of room, for there were only eight of us: apart from Wang and myself, there was only one Vietnamese, who represented the 100 odd Vietnamese students, and five teachers and officials.

The drive was a long one, because the bus had to make its way through a maze of by-streets, in detour of the central streets, where the popular festivities were taking place. We smoked and chatted gaily, and the teachers were most amiable. Everyone was in high spirits. At the entrance to the stands we were separated: foreigners and Chinese were assigned to different stands, and Wang was the only one who was allowed to come with me.

We were very early and naturally got to talking. Wang felt

himself to be the host, the receiving party, and so, in accordance with traditional Chinese courtesy, engaged me in conversation.

We started out with politics, notably Vietnam. Wang politely insisted that a world war was the only way to stop the aggression, so that there was no need to supply Vietnam with military hardware, such assistance being "unworthy", but the thing to do was to aggravate the Berlin or some other question—no matter which—and to start a world war.

"Imperialism fears a world war. Its threats are those of a paper tiger; the sooner a world revolutionary war breaks out, the sooner will imperialism be destroyed!"

"Do you think China would take part in a war of that kind?" I asked.

"China will do its best," he replied in a vague sort of way.

"China could have done a great deal for a victory over imperialism," I objected. "But it doesn't want to, and has done nothing."

"You should be the first to start the war. Only then shall we believe you."

He changed the subject and began praising the latest film, *The Subterranean War*. As I have said, the film was meant to condition the public for a new and "gay" war against the "paper tigers", a war which had to be faced without fear, and then the "paper tigers" would burn up in its flames.

"So you liked the film. Did you yourself take part in the war?" I asked Wang (in China people are not usually asked whether they had "been at the front", for the guerilla war first against the Japanese and then against the Kuomintang was fought all over the country).

Wang willingly told me that as a very young man he had been a guerilla fighter in Southern Hopei: he had not had a chance to fight underground but had carried away a vivid memory of the war. He had quickly worked his way up to become a Party functionary. After Liberation, he had gone through Peking University, where he then stayed on as an Office employee. But he still had his military bearing and the common sense of a military man.

"True, the war was not exactly like the one in the film," he remarked cautiously, "but we must teach the young generation to face up to the ordeal, instead of intimidating them. Only in battle does one find out what war actually is."

Wang also asked me about life in the USSR—he knew nothing about it.

Our talk was interrupted by the fireworks, a magnificent and fabulous pageant. Each new blaze of rockets erupted in a different and fantastic pattern, blending into an amazing symphony of light, colour and fiery shape. A Chinese fireworks display cannot be described, it simply has to be seen, and the hundreds of thousands of Chinese in the square drank in the luxuriant beauty of this festival.

Our final May outing was to the planetarium. As a child, I used to be keen on astronomy and had often gone to the Moscow planetarium; later I had gone there again and again to hear lectures on galaxies and the latest astronomical discoveries, so that now I was glad to have a look at the Peking planetarium.

In equipment the planetarium was far from perfect, but the audience was a grateful one: it consisted of first-year Vietnamese students, who had apparently never seen anything like it. First we were taken through the halls with mock-ups and diagrams on Plato, Copernicus and Newton, and orbiting sputniks and spaceships. Although there was no mention anywhere of the USSR, Chinese astronomers and devices were given ample space. I could not help asking the guide whether the spaceship on a drawing was Soviet or American.

"We explain only the principle of the thing, without touching on politics."

"Your drawing doesn't look like a Soviet spacecraft, so it must be American," I taunted him.

"We did not intend any such likeness, we have only tried to explain the principles of the craft's movement."

"And who is this particular cosmonaut?"

"It's no one in particular, it's a scheme."

"Don't you mention Gagarin anywhere?"

"No. We only explain matters of principle."

My ever-present Ma put in a word:

"The comrades here are quite right. They explain scientific and atheistic questions of principle, instead of adding grist to the mill of US imperialism and modern revisionism."

The response of the Vietnamese was quite different. They were really curious and eager to see and hear. I was delighted at their thirst for knowledge and their ability to hear and learn. They had a word of sympathy for me.

"Gagarin's feat was a great one," said Nguyen Thi-Cahn, with whom I eventually struck up a closer acquaintance. "We

quite understand you. It's a pity nothing has been said about him here."

On the way back I remarked to Ma that I could not see why so little was being said about space exploration.

"Aren't the Chinese people interested in space exploration?"

"Why, of course they are," he replied with obvious reluctance.

"Why is it then that space launchings are never reported?"

"We do not want to stoke up the myth about the imperialists' military might."

"But if so, why do you suppress the Soviet space achievements?"

He did not reply.

"Perhaps you think there's no point in wasting money on space research?"

"No, it's not that," Ma was clearly trying to make up his mind. "Space exploration is necessary. Once China builds up its science and technology, it will also start to explore outer space and this, I think, is not a long way off. The Soviet cosmonauts are representatives of the people, they are brave and courageous. But the modern revisionists have been using their achievements as bargaining counters in securing an ignominious peace, and to humiliate China."

"What nonsense!" I could not help saying.

Need I say that such exchanges put me in a bad mood, and at night I did not sleep well at all.

After the holiday programme, I went on a one-day trip to Tientsin organised by the Soviet Embassy. We had a bus with a Chinese driver. At the city limits our passports were given two thorough checks at special stone blockhouses, set up as checkpoints especially for foreigners. We had also been given special certificates, something in the nature of warrants, which kept the numerous staff at the blockhouses busy cross-checking and verifying.

As ill luck would have it, Tientsin's famous bookshops had their day off. The lake-side park also turned out to be unattractive, for the water had drained, leaving behind it dirty puddles and pools in place of the lakes and ponds.

All day long we roamed the city streets, using maps to get our bearings. It was fairly obvious that even in that big city the people were not used to seeing foreigners, and there were

many curious eyes staring at us. Whole crowds followed us into shops and gathered round as soon as we stopped.

A foreigner in Tientsin was now indeed a rare bird, and the people were curious to note everything about him—his face, his clothes and his manners. They trailed leisurely after us, as if they had no other, more important business to do. We felt no sense of hostility.

The interest we were causing gave rise to a mixed feeling, and our isolation seemed to be some sort of artificial quarantine imposed on the curious people of this colourful and cordial city.

We returned to Peking in the small hours of the night to find the streets brightly lit up, with groups of young people and reinforced police squads posted at the crossroads: it had been announced that China had carried out another one of its atomic bomb tests.

Until 2.00 a.m. our University was ablaze with light, and the gates draped in red stood open. There were heaps of crumpled paper flowers and scraps of slogan streamers in the ditches, gay music over the loudspeakers, and discordant patriotic singing coming from the lanes of the park, the rose-garden, and the open windows of the auditoria. The Chinese were celebrating their triumph.

In the morning, Ma brought in a special edition of the papers announcing in red characters that the thermonuclear materials used in the blast had justified their purpose. The tone of the announcement was extremely boastful.

The holiday merry-go-round, which had upset my daily routine, had now come to an end. When I got back to my studies, I looked through the holiday papers I had not yet read, and came across Chou En-lai's May Day speech before thousands of young people.

My futao had drawn a heavy red line around the paragraph which said that "a great proletarian cultural revolution" was the main task in China.

"Premier Chou's words are very important!" Ma exclaimed. "Very important, indeed! It is now the most important thing in China's political life."

"In the USSR the cultural revolution took place very long ago," I remarked. "Lenin and the whole Party worked for universal literacy and for giving the working people access to mankind's cultural values."

"No, that's not so. It is something you have never had and cannot possibly have," Ma arrogantly replied.

III. THE MOVEMENT EXPLODES

TENG TO'S "BLACK BOOKS". THE FIRST TATZUPAO. ANARCHY.
HSITANG CAFE. "DUAL RULE". THE JUNE 3 ASSAULT

Although the Office had not taken out any subscriptions for the Chinese papers for me, Ma himself had a regular monthly subscription and let me read his papers. He regarded newspaper reading a most important business, but could not take out a longer subscription because he was short of money. When he got his pay, he usually redeemed his bread vouchers for several packets of biscuits, bought himself some sweets and signed up for the paper. He told me in an apologetic tone that he had a sweet tooth: in his native Chkiang, a southern sugarcane province, sweet things were part of the everyday diet, whereas up here in the north, he found the general diet lacking in sweets. That is why he bought biscuits in addition to his guaranteed three meals a day.

The paper was delivered at lunch time, and Ma liked to read it just before his afternoon nap. As the paper rustled to the floor, I knew that he was asleep and I could take over. Trying not to disturb him, I glanced through the paper, but there were few interesting items and virtually no information about events in the world. The communiqués issued by the Vietnamese Headquarters were the only regular column that was always worth reading.

Whole pages were devoted to censure campaigns. Attacks in the press were a long-standing practice, but in 1966 they became particularly vehement. Campaigns of this kind had usually been well thought out and gradual, betraying thorough backroom organisation. Six months at a stretch, for instance, would be devoted to denouncing someone's article, another six

months—some play or film, and yet another—some literary critic, and so on.

In the autumn of 1965, however, there was a qualitative change in the censure campaigns: these became multi-pronged, being at the same time directed against the historian and playwright Wu Han, the films *Early One Spring*, in February and *Stage Sisters*, and the playwrights Yang Han-sheng, Hsia-Yen and Tien Han for their attempts to revive the traditions of the progressive literature and theatre of the 1930s. All these campaigns, particularly the one against Wu Han, rose to a hysterical pitch, with the press issuing threats, abuse, and accusations against the victims, but with no apparent punitive measures being applied against them. True, for a long time most people did not know what was actually happening.

From the beginning of May, the Peking papers launched a vicious day-to-day censure campaign against Teng To, vilifying him in every possible way. He was said to be the "ring-leader of the black band".

"Who is this Teng To?" I asked Ma.

"A Party functionary. Up to 1957 he was chief editor of *Jenmin jihpao*, and is now the secretary of the Peking Party Committee," Ma reluctantly replied.

"How has it happened that a Party functionary has turned out to be the 'ring-leader of a black band'?"

"That happens," he avoided a straightforward answer. "Teng To's exposure is another great victory for Mao Tse-tung thought!"

Every event in the PRC turns out to be this kind of victory, which leaves nothing else to be said. Still, the secretary of the capital's Party Committee is a person of high standing in the Party, and Ma, as a member of the Peking Party organisation, should have regarded him as a high-ranking leader.

The numerous articles against Teng To showed that the charges against him were that in 1960-62 he had published some essays under an assumed name, casting doubt on some of Mao's "thoughts". Indeed, as I read the "quotations" cited in the censure article, I could not help marvelling at the man's courage in saying things that were most amazing in Chinese conditions. Thus, he had a lampoon which made stinging ridicule of the word "great" and the "great" habit of inserting it as an incantation in the oddest places, no matter whether it fitted or not.

As a matter of fact, China's anthem and every song and radio broadcast at the time began and ended with that word.

At first I found it strange to hear day in day out over the University radio the never-ending ceremonious refrain: "The Great Leader Mao Tse-tung", and "The Great Helmsman", but soon the word was somehow effaced through frequent repetition and its proper meaning no longer came through.

Teng To had brought together most of his essays and satirical sketches in two books: *Notes from the Village of the Three* and *Evening Conversations at Yenshan*. The books were now banned, and anyone found in possession of them was denounced and harassed.

Teng To took a sharply anti-Mao ideological stand. He wrote that one should "learn" from the "stronger state", "unite" with it, and "be happy to have a friend who is stronger than oneself" ("The Laws of Friendship and Hospitality"). He made transparent hints, saying that "one who thinks too high of himself and pushes his teacher aside after the first few successes will never be able to learn". His statements were taken to mean condemnation of the break with the Soviet Union, and caused extreme anger among Mao's supporters.

Teng To had a wonderful sketch, "Great Twaddle", satirising not just bluster in general, but Mao's well-known thesis about "the wind from the East prevailing over the wind from the West". At the end of his scathing analysis, Teng To publicly advised Mao to retire. He wrote: "One cannot help matters even by using the greatest words and phrases; on the contrary, wider use of them will make things worse. Hence my advice to those who like great idle talk: you would do well, my friends, to do more reading and think more, but talk less, and whenever the urge to talk comes upon you, retire at once, without wasting any of your own or other people's time and energy."

Teng To was very well versed in ancient culture. He had even taken part in compiling *The New 300 Selected Tang Poems*. The golden age of ancient Chinese poetry had left a vast legacy, and over the ages experts had put out small volumes of the *Selected 300*. Upon Liberation, it was decided to scrap the old collection and put out a fresh one: the traditional 300 in number but more in the modern spirit.

The new 300 were poems of social criticism and civic spirit, courageous and accusatory. Indeed, this kind of tradition has always run through Chinese literature, and there would seem to be nothing strange or criminal in picking and publishing accusatory poems more than a thousand years old. But in criticising Teng To, the papers insisted that he had done so with the express purpose of discrediting the incumbent leadership.

The Tang poets had criticised emperors and mandarins, but the present-day Peking leaders took it as a slur on themselves.

This primitive one-track approach had, of course, been adopted on the initiative of a toadying critic whose sole aim was to say that Teng To was guilty. What of—did not matter. The thing was to destroy him, and destroyed he was.

Although I lived in China, among the Chinese, I did not realise the full intensity of the internal political struggle, the bitter rivalry between the various groups within the central leadership. With the benefit of hindsight, let me now say a few short words for a better understanding of the events of that period. In September and October 1965, Mao ordered that criticism should be levelled against the playwright Wu Han. The Shanghai critic, Yao Wen Yuan, Mao's loyal minion, promptly came up with a censure article, but it met with some resistance within the CPC Central Committee and was not carried by the central press. The article first appeared in Shanghai, and only twenty days later, in the central press. A "Group for the Affairs of the Cultural Revolution" was set up under the Central Committee, with Peng Chen, Politburo member and First Secretary of the Peking Party Committee, playing the most active role. In February, Peng managed to circulate a CC letter, which he himself had drafted and signed, aiming in effect to wind up the campaign.

To counter Peng and his supporters on the CC, Mao's wife, Chiang Ching, who at the time did not hold any official post either in the Party or in the government, at the request of Marshal Lin Biao, Politburo member and Minister of Defence, organised a meeting of army political workers in Shanghai. It lasted 20 days and adopted a Protocol which became a platform for the "great proletarian cultural revolution". The Protocol meant a revision of the CPC Central Committee's decisions and a disavowal of the whole cultural policy over the 17 years of the people's power.

The Protocol said: "Upon the founding of the state, a black, anti-socialist, anti-Party line, antagonistic to Mao Tse-tung thought, usurped our policy in literary and artistic circles. This black line is a blend of bourgeois aesthetic ideas with the ideas of modern revisionism and the so-called art and literature of the 1930s.... We are resolved to carry out a great socialist revolution on the cultural front."

These stentorian charges against an allegedly bourgeois, anti-Party and anti-socialist "black line" were no more than lies and demagoguery aimed to dupe the Chinese people and were

disproved by the whole course of the PRC's advance along the socialist road in the early years of the people's revolution. It is a fact, however, that China's cultural development was often out of line with Mao Tse-tung "thought" and directives, for his designs were often thwarted by healthy Party forces, who relied on the past experience of revolutionary struggle and, notably, the experience of the progressive art and literature of the 1930s, which had developed independently of Maoism, under the influence of the internationalist-minded Communists in the CPC. Action of that kind indeed ran counter to Mao Tse-tung "thought", and so had to be stamped out by means of a coup that was demagogically termed "socialist". Mao Tse-tung himself went over the Shanghai Protocol twice to revise its content.

In April, the Mao group stepped up its pressure. The papers carried another article by Yao Wen Yuan, which was this time spearheaded directly against Teng To. A mass "popular" movement was the only thing that was lacking. The movement had been mentioned in the February Protocol, but at the time the latter had yet to be made public.

Returning from the cinema to my hostel on the evening of May 25, I noticed an unusual stir: the radio in the corridor was going on in a solemn strain.

I do not know whether it was a central-radio or a university broadcast. The announcer carried on in a measured, ceremonious voice, repeating the same text on the hour, with majestic music in between. I had heard such broadcasts before. Thus, when the CPC Central Committee had been invited to send over a delegation to the CPSU's 23rd Congress and had replied with a long and rude statement, the university had echoed with venomous words all day long. At the start of that broadcast, I had been watching a film in the TV room. The TV programme had not been interrupted and the CC statement had been put on the air in the usual news bulletin, half an hour after it had gone out over the radio. So, when the Chinese watching the film suddenly heard the announcer's solemn voice in the corridor, they had risen as a man and moved to the loudspeakers. I had finished watching the film all alone, and had then gone to my room to find Ma by the radio, going full blast, and rending the air with resolute intonations.

The reading of the statement over, Ma had switched off the set and risen. I had felt that I had had to say something and so

had repeated from memory several sentences that I had found obscure. Ma had willingly explained.

"I think this is just being rude and tactless without good cause," I had said.

"In political struggle, there is no need to stand upon ceremony," he had declared.

"But this is a matter of unity for the sake of the revolution!"

"The revolution has only one language—our language!"

"This means making every other word a 'great' or a 'revolutionary'," I had mocked, recalling Teng To's satirical sketch.

"We denounce those who talk like you."

That night Ma had been unusually pompous.

Now, on May 25, the radio was again going on in grand style, and the more I listened, the more I was surprised at what was being said.

"Students and teachers at Peking University have today put up a tatzupao¹ accusing the Peking University's rector and Party Committee of degeneration and deviations from Chairman Mao's ideas, and of following a black, counter-revolutionary and bourgeois line instead of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. The tatzupao has seven signatures...."

As far as I could gather, the announcer then went on to list the names of those who had signed.

I recalled that back in 1957, during the fight against the Right-wing elements, all "pure" revolutionaries had made a point of vouching for their revolutionary spirit in numerous tatzupaos, posting these across walls, special stands, and whole buildings, or hanging them out on clothes lines like washing. But I had never yet heard of a common tatzupao being broadcast over the radio as a matter of state importance.

I felt a sense of curiosity and unease at the bustle in the corridors, and went up to the window. The campus was ablaze with lights and the students were still awake, although it was nine o'clock—a late hour, for the Chinese go to bed early. That was the first time that Ma stayed out at night and I slept alone.

The next morning, on May 26, the skies were grey and overcast and, after the painfully dry winter, the wind was

¹Tatzupao—literally "big-character paper"; actually a wall poster, sometimes the size of a blanket, a patchwork affair, expressing the views, opinions and proposals not of the government but of some individual or group.

refreshingly damp. I usually went to have my breakfast after the Chinese students had already gone, so that when I crossed the path to the dining-hall the lanes were quite empty, except for some returning Vietnamese. That day there were many people about, with groups of lively students scurrying all over the place. The walls of the dining-room, the post office and the cinema hall were posted over with fresh tatzupaos, and more were being put up. There were already three rows of these, and the authors of the new ones had to stand on each other's shoulders to reach the empty space up the wall. I stopped in front of the Chinese students' dining-room. Over the entrance there was a long row of tatzupaos, and above all these a large inscription said: "Our Party Committee and Administration are black from head to foot." Then came the rationale. I read the first paragraph, which accused the Party Committee of betraying the CPC General Line and following a bourgeois, counter-revolutionary line of its own, together with the "criminals from Peita", the shorthand for Peking University. Students stood about reading these posters in silence.

A young man of about 20, in incredibly patched up and washed out clothes, was running back and forth along the side of the building, gesticulating and shouting that the "traitors" had been humiliating and harassing "the working masses", and that he was being expelled for poor progress "in defiance of the class principle and the CPC General Line". His drawn face betrayed lack of sleep and was quite motionless, except for his lips, which had a convulsive twitch when he exclaimed:

"Isn't this a bourgeois, counter-revolutionary policy? Let them answer before the masses!"

"It's revisionism," said a youth by the wall.

"That's what I say!" the speaker joyously ran up to him.

The rest were silent, and the most resolute youth asked the speaker whether he had signed the tatzupao alone.

"Yes, I have, but there are many of us and our numbers will grow," he replied and ran off to another inquiring group.

That day all the students still had their bags with them, for they had intended to attend classes.

When I was returning from breakfast, I was surprised to find the lanes swarming with students. Crowds gathered around arm-waving speakers, ringing them in to hear any dispute that flared up. The Vietnamese were also reading the tatzupaos.

Nguyen Thi-Canh, a peasant boy from Vietnam, whom I had met before, said: "The Chinese students have decided not

to attend any classes today. They say they have a cultural revolution."

"Are you having any classes?"

"Yes, for the time being," he replied. "What about you?"

I said I did not know, and then for the first time the sad thought crossed my mind that I, too, would, perhaps, be affected by the "cultural revolution".

Ma was back in our room, looking tired but excited.

"Can you tell me what's going on?" I asked. "On my way to the dining-hall I saw a glaring inscription in very big characters: 'Down with the black Party Committee!' What's the meaning of that?"

"China is a socialist and revolutionary country," he answered, his eyes sparkling. "Over here, anyone may say what he thinks, for China is the most democratic state in the world. Some of our students believe that the Party Committee and the University Administrators have committed some political mistakes. That is why they have been writing tatzupaos to remove from office those who are responsible. This kind of thing is only possible in China!"

"But you don't need a revolution to dismiss a bad university head."

"That's something quite different," Ma objected. "It's not just a matter of mistakes and shortcomings in their work, but of discontent among the masses. This is political, class struggle, and proof that in socialist society the class struggle becomes more intense."

"So it's the masses who have been writing the tatzupaos?"

"No, you can't say that as yet. It's still the students, non-Party and non-Komsomol young people, who write them, whereas Party members are virtually not involved at all. We have been reading their tatzupaos, but that does not mean they are right. It is discussion that brings out the truth of an idea and shows who is right, for they also have a right to criticise."

"The tatzupaos mention the Party organiser, Cheng Chin-wu. What sort of a man is he? I haven't met him."

"No, he hasn't had time to see you. Comrade Cheng is a very busy man and works a great deal. If you had come in a group of foreign students, he would have perhaps met you. In the autumn he received the Vietnamese, but they numbered more than a hundred. Since there were just the two of you, Lida and yourself, we decided to confine ourselves to a reception at Comrade Liu's, who is Deputy Dean of the department."

"Why, I have no complaints about him. I merely wanted to get some idea of the man."

Ma willingly obliged: "Comrade Cheng came to the University in 1962. Before that he had been a political worker in the People's Liberation Army. At 16, he had gone to fight in the anti-Japanese war, and then in the civil war, had been wounded three times, and had risen from a rank-and-file fighter to a political worker. Comrade Cheng is an old revolutionary and Party member, having joined the Party on the battlefield; he is a loyal fighter of Chairman Mao's and had personally seen him at Yen-an. Over here, at the University, he had an important Party assignment to root out any modern revisionism and admiration of all things foreign. You know, of course, that we once had your advisers over here. Well, Comrade Cheng successfully carried out that hard and responsible political struggle. Those who had succumbed to the bad influences were sent down to the countryside to be re-educated through manual work and to live the life of the people. It's very good for their thinking. Thanks to Comrade Cheng, we now have a healthy revolutionary collective."

"You did say that he is a loyal fighter of Chairman Mao's?" I asked with a hint of irony.

"Yes, but even men of his stature may be criticised. China is a democratic country. It is up to a meeting to discuss and to decide who is right and who isn't."

As he walked out of the room, he said:

"By the way, today we're all reading the tatzupaos, and so there'll be no classes, and tomorrow there's to be a discussion."

The days were now full of tumult. Back in my own room I could hear the hum of voices outside. The lanes were crowded with arguing students, and the walls were being papered over with fresh tatzupaos. I now had to make my way to a dining-hall through a thick crowd of people, with the restless buzz of voices in the air.

Wang, the little equipment officer, came up to me and asked whether I understood the tatzupaos. I nodded, and Wang went on with his usual polite smile:

"The Party Committee asked me to inform you that the tatzupaos are a method of the cultural revolution and China's internal affair. We ask you not to read them."

"I'll try not to," I said, "although that's not easy: your yard-high tatzupaos are all over the place. I find them staring at me when I go in to lunch."

"Still, we ask you not to read them. They deal only with internal matters and will not affect you in any way. If you read them, you could get a false and one-sided idea of our affairs. It's natural that you should be interested in the PRC's life and a movement as great as the cultural revolution. In a month or two, we shall organise special lectures for foreign students, and it will then be possible to ask questions and receive answers. You may even be admitted to these lectures together with the Vietnamese."

I thanked him without much enthusiasm.

One afternoon in late May, the strictly regimented silence hour was interrupted by the blare of the radio, which started broadcasting a meeting of the Party Committee. Party organiser Cheng was saying that the demagogues should be punished, and flatly rejected the charge that he was a "black", a member of some band, or an opponent of the General Line.

"Only office-seekers and immature youngsters can claim that," he said, and his voice rose to a hysterical pitch. "What do they know of the revolution?! Here, look. I have proved my loyalty to Mao Tse-tung by shedding my blood! I will be true to our beloved leader to my last breath, all of us, the whole Party Committee is devoted to our Party! We fought for the liberation, and it is we who have ushered in the Mao Tse-tung epoch! It is we who have been building a new, strong and powerful China! We have never been afraid of death or hardship on the field of battle! Long live Chairman Mao! Glory! Glory! Glory!"

Others spoke about the mistakes in their work, about how these had been redressed, about healthy and constructive criticism, and about the handful of demagogues and office-seekers who were speculating on the revolution.

"The Party men should come out before the non-Party mass and give them a rebuff," someone said to a burst of applause.

Students were streaming along the lanes, but instead of books and notebooks they were carrying chairs and stools: the university was holding an open Party meeting. It lasted all day, and the loudspeakers were again going full blast, so that you could not help hearing what was being said. Someone proposed that Party members should form three-men groups to strip the walls of any "unfounded" tatzupaos. The motion was passed amidst much noise and shouting. One of the speakers even mentioned me.

"Comrades," he urged, "there are many foreigners at our University. Some are friends from Indonesia and Vietnam, but there are also other foreigners. There is even one Soviet man—a man from the country of modern revisionism. We should be vigilant and should not put up our tatzupaos in the open, where they can be read by China's enemies."

His words were followed by another burst of shouting.

"Let him answer, let the comrade answer!" someone shouted in a high-pitched and grating voice. "Tell us what Chairman Mao has said about the tatzupaos! Come on, answer this at once! Do you or do you not know what Chairman Mao has said? The tatzupaos should be put up all over the place to enable the people to read them!"

The gist of the dispute was obvious: the Party Committee's spokesman wanted the tatzupaos aimed against the Committee to be taken off on the pretext of foreigners' being present at the University, whereas his opponents wanted them to remain. Fierce argument also raged on how long a tatzupao should remain on the wall, and who had the right to take off the old and put up new ones, for the University was running short of empty walls. Wherever you looked, you were sure to see another wall papered over with posters. At second-floor level, the characters were larger and at eye-level they were minute. It was physically impossible to read all that.

The din was becoming unbearable. As I still failed to attach much importance to what was going on and felt annoyed at being prevented from working, I finally went into the city, where life was still proceeding at its usual, measured pace.

I went into a European-style café on the Hsitang and ordered a cup of coffee, which I had missed badly. True, the coffee was far from perfect, but I was thankful for small mercies. As I glanced about me, I suddenly noticed that a young Chinese, wearing a pair of large spectacles, who sat at a corner table gave me a nod and invited me to come over. I was surprised, but crossed over to his table. Like all Chinese he was dressed in blue but instead of the usual military tunic he was wearing a sports coat and drain-pipe trousers in the European fashion. He also had rings on his fingers.

"I believe we have met at the club, haven't we?" he said in English.

"I'm afraid you're mistaken," I answered.

"I'm sorry, it's my eyesight. Aren't you a Chilean? Where do you come from then?"

"From the Soviet Union."

"You don't say! How do you happen to be in China? On your way somewhere via China? You are an enemy of the government, you know."

He stressed the word "government", and kept on stressing it throughout the whole of our talk.

"I'm no enemy of China," I said with a wry smile. "I have studied Chinese culture all my life. But now that you know who I am, aren't you afraid to talk to me?"

"No," he replied. "First, I'm a sick man and my eyesight is very poor—that's why I mistook you for someone else—and second, I'm not local, I come from Hong Kong. My father has a big shop over there, and I don't care much about the local rules. I'm also a visitor. It's a pity I can't study because of my health."

He took out from his pockets several anti-Soviet propaganda pamphlets, published in Peking in English. China is chock-full of anti-Soviet literature. These booklets, pamphlets and magazines in German, Russian, English, French, Japanese and other languages will be found wherever any foreigners congregate: at hotels, shops, railway stations, and check-points. They are sold to Chinese but are usually pressed upon foreigners free of charge.

Everyone in China is in duty bound to make a study of various anti-Soviet propaganda writings. The students use propaganda pamphlets to study foreign languages. In spring, I often met them in the park learning their texts by rote in monotonous voices. Thoughtless cramming in general is an essential part of Chinese student studies.

"Here's what I've been offered to read," my companion went on. "I mustn't read too much, and I read better in English than in Chinese. Your country has done a great deal for China, and every Chinese knows this not only down here, but also back at our place, in Hong Kong."

I noticed that the customers at the café were paying some attention to our talk and were even uneasy about it. The tables around us were gradually becoming empty, and the waitresses were whispering to each other in alarm at the far end of the bar.

"You're not in a hurry, are you?" the young man asked. "I should like to have a talk with you."

He began telling me about his life in Hong Kong, complained of the low enrolment quota for Chinese at Hong Kong University, where admission was free for Whites only,

while being restricted for Chinese, and complained about the boredom in Peking. He clearly felt that he was shunned by the people around because of some vague fear. On the whole, his life here was cheerless and complicated.

"Over here, you are, no doubt, considered Enemy Number One," he said. "I can't imagine how the authorities have let you in. True, at heart the Chinese themselves have a feeling of friendship and gratitude for the Soviet Union and your people, but are afraid to show it."

He remarked that the Chinese people were not to be judged by a handful of intriguing politicians who were clinging to their personal power.

"Just look at what they've done to China!" he sadly exclaimed. "Life here has become much worse than in Hong Kong. No one dares to speak his mind, and everyone spies on each other. A most distressing, I would say, tragic state of affairs. My father told me that it was the Soviet people who had been helping China to develop rapidly, with life in the country becoming better and better. But now this is a desert. This is my fifth year in China, but no one wants to make friends with me, and my only friend has been sent down to the countryside. That's loneliness, but loneliness in China is quite against the rules and the whole tenor of our life. The Chinese have always had strong ties of kinship and friendship between people of the same age. But here I am all alone, with foreigners for my only acquaintances. What's more, it's getting worse. Do you know hundreds of thousands of school leavers in Peking are loitering about for want of work? The government has decided that upon leaving school they must go to work in the countryside for at least a year. However, they do not go, but since they have no manual-work certificates, they cannot enrol at any institute or take on a job at a factory."

"But isn't work at a factory manual work as well?"

"No, a factory is not a village. The government maintains that it is not the manual work itself that is important, but the living in the countryside together with the peasants. No meat, no rice, you cannot bring along any tinned food or receive any food parcels. The point is to live, eat and work together with the peasants. Work is by no means the most important thing; the main purpose is to dull the minds of the people so as to keep them from putting two and two together."

He knew nothing about life in the Soviet Union and asked me many questions. I realised that the young nationalist from

Hong Kong was no staunch friend of my country, but he was definitely interested to hear my account of Soviet life.

I never met him again.

The days went by. June had come, but the studies at the University had not been resumed. Students and teachers seemed to stick to the papered-over walls like flies to sugar. There was growing interest in the tatzupaos. But among the militant and excited faces in the crowd, one now and again saw signs of alarm. Here and there one found traces of stripped tatzupaos: groups of three or four Party members went about scraping them off with steel brushes by decision of the Party organisation, especially in the lanes which the Vietnamese and myself always took when going down to the dining-hall. But fresh student tatzupaos were immediately put up in place of the old ones and people flocked to read them in even larger numbers.

At the intersections of lanes, plywood stands were erected to hang up thick red sheets of paper covered with calligraphic characters, which I at once knew to be official. They expressed support for the Party Committee, the Party bureaux of the departments, and Party organiser Cheng in person, and were signed not by individuals but by full bodies of men, like "The whole collective of students and teachers of the Astronomy Department", or "Party group of the Second Course of the Physics Department". Some tatzupaos were written by the Komsomol organisation or the Party Committee itself. A resolution adopted by an open Party meeting was prominently displayed. When I read it, I discovered that I was also a figure of some importance. One of its paragraphs said: "As there are foreigners, notably one from the Soviet Union, taking courses at the University, there is need scrupulously to observe the decision of the State Council on protecting our country's prestige, and not to hang out any critical tatzupaos in places open to foreigners..."

To one side of the resolution, there was a large-character tatzupao written on old newspapers. Under a banner headline, "Obey the highest instructions alone, the instructions of our deeply beloved leader, Chairman Mao!", it said: "Look at them perverting Chairman Mao's instructions! Chairman Mao teaches us: 'The tatzupao should be hung out in public, for the broad masses to see.' Let us rally in the defence of Chairman Mao's instructions! Let us defend our Party CC! Down with the Black Party Committee! Down with black bandit Cheng!

Look at them fighting against Chairman Mao's supreme instructions!"

To remove any possible doubts, a thick black arrow ran across the text and pierced the top-quality red paper of the Party Committee's resolution.

Well, well, well! That was something new: an open attack against the Party committee under the slogan of "protecting the CC". The whole atmosphere at the University indicated that the Party Committee had been unable to stop the "revolutionaries", and that all studies had been wound up.

One day I passed by a group of elderly men—teachers, as far as I could judge. They walked fast, talking in excited tones. An irritated voice said behind my shoulder: "The students have forgotten all about discipline. They have been shutting me up with Mao Tse-tung quotations, as if Chairman Mao is opposed to discipline."

"They won't listen to anyone, and there's nothing to be done about it," another man joined in. But glancing at me sideways, they all fell silent.

For the time being all these goings on had not affected me personally. Professor Kuo still came to see me punctually. We were now being left alone more often, for my futao Ma was obviously neglecting his duties. Sometimes I even thought that he was deliberately avoiding me for fear of any possible questions. In the morning he was gone before I was up and, in breach of every rule, came back as late as 2.00 a.m., stealing in like a cat and going to bed without a sound.

Returning from my breakfast one day, I found Ma in the room.

"Are you free today?" I asked with surprise.

"No, I'm busy, very busy." Ma was obviously embarrassed. "But I was waiting for you specially to tell you that the Foreign Students' Office and the Department request you not to read the tatzupaos."

"Wang has already told me so. I won't read them, if you like."

"That's fine, but I didn't know he had already had a talk with you."

Here was an amazing thing: throughout the three months, I had never yet come across an organisational bungle, never before had one Chinese been ignorant of what another had been saying.

"I'm very busy just now, you know," he explained in an apologetic tone. "A mass movement—an unprecedentedly

massive movement—has started at the University and has been going on with great enthusiasm. But foreigners should not take part in it, because it is a purely Chinese internal affair. So we ask you not to read the tatzupaos and advise you not to go to the library."

"But how am I to change my books?" I asked.

"I'll change them for you. We advise you not to go there, because the revolutionary youth have been holding mass meetings by the library."

Since the second ban couched in terms of a piece of "advice" would affect my studies, I was somewhat irritated:

"I have no use for your rallies, but the delays over my books will be most annoying."

"As far as possible, the University Administration has been willing to oblige you and to create the necessary conditions for your work. We are restricting your activities, but only because that's absolutely necessary. It's for your own good."

"Very well," I replied and Ma at once left the room.

I decided to follow Ma's advice and to take care.

The rallies were becoming more frequent, gathering two or three hundred students. They were held on the ash-covered playground near the students' dining-halls, at the stadium, near the amateur-arts stage, on the library steps, in front of the main entrance to the administrative building, and even in the dining-halls at meal times.

The most zealous speakers had already gone hoarse, but the hoarser they got, the more cutting were their gestures and the more scathing their words. One banner hung across a lane said: "Down with the black Kingdom!" Another slogan, "Down with the black bandit Cheng!", was chalked in a giant white column on the pavement.

One afternoon in early June, when the University was supposed to be at rest, the loudspeakers in the corridor suddenly came to life with a jarring burst of noise and then a clear girlish voice shouted on top of all the din and racket:

"Long live the cultural revolution! Down with the treacherous black band! Down with the counter-revolutionary Party Committee! All revolutionary comrades, unite! Chairman Mao teaches us: 'Revolution is no crime, rebellion is a just cause!' Dear comrades, young revolutionaries! You were born and have grown up in the greatest epoch—the epoch of our beloved leader Mao Tse-tung! Rise up and rally together,

fight for the advance and victory of the great proletarian cultural revolution! Down with the rotten black clique, down with the revisionist bourgeois line!"

This was followed by more noise, garbled shouts, much stamping and general uproar. Then another voice shrieked:

"Death to Cheng! Death to the scoundrels! Death! Death! Down with the counter-revolution!"

Suddenly there was a click and the loudspeakers went dead. I ran out into the corridor. Bac Ninh, my Vietnamese neighbour, stood by his door with a troubled look on his face. Office employees scurried up and down the corridor. Bac Ninh greeted me:

"Have you heard? It was the revolutionary students. They say that they have taken over the broadcasting centre, taken it over by force. And now the Administration must have turned off the mains. We'll find out everything tomorrow," he said and went upstairs to the second floor to join the other Vietnamese.

He was right. The next morning the Party Committee set up a huge poster, which said:

"A group of students duped by demagogues and office-seekers, not stopping at violence and hooliganism, have seized the University relay centre and, in violation of state laws, have made a licentious anti-Party broadcast. The Party Committee is to carry out an inquiry and punish the criminals. The relay centre is to be switched off pending the end of the inquiry."

On my way out to town I had to pass an office building, a six-storeyed rectangle covered with ceramic tiles, which had recently become a favourite spot for rallies. One day I was walking along in the middle of the asphalt lane, trying to walk slowly and at a deliberate pace. A rally was on as usual. Suddenly there was a sharp cry:

"Attention, comrades! Here comes a foreigner!"

It appeared that pickets had been posted in the lane running along the building, and a picketer had warned the meeting of my approach.

As the speaker fell silent, all heads turned in my direction and all eyes were fixed upon me. A ripple of murmurs ran through the crowd:

"He's Soviet."

Then something seemed to snap, and several voices broke out in sing-song:

"Mao Tse-tung! Ten thousand years to Mao Tse-tung!"

The crowd roared in unison.

I could not help quickening my steps and walked past the roaring and ecstatic crowd, looking straight ahead of me. I looked back only when I was at least a hundred metres away. Although all faces were still turned in my direction, the speaker had already resumed his speech, but I could hear only snatches of what he was saying and could not make out the meaning.

At the gate, I greeted the men on duty as usual, but they did not reciprocate: some looked away, others dropped their eyes. This had never happened before, for the Chinese are a polite people.

June 2 began as usual. At 5.30 a.m., the radio in the corridor started out as it had always done before, although for the past few days it had been silent. We were in no hurry to get up. Ma was still half awake, for the previous night he had returned very late and had managed to get no more than two or three hours of sleep. The radio started out with some bracing music and then went on, as usual, to a review of the national papers. I did not take much notice of what was being said, but Ma suddenly jumped out of bed and started pulling on his clothes. I listened more closely and found that the words sounded familiar: it was a repetition of the programme for May 25 about the first tatzupao of the "cultural revolution", but this time the announcer was reading it in a different tone, among the items of a review of *Jenmin jihpao*, the central Party paper. In other words, the report had been printed.

"Did you hear that? That's important news! The Party CC supports the revolution," Ma said excitedly and was off, merely adding, as he went out, that I would have no classes that day.

Ma's emotions disturbed me and excited my curiosity, but since there were to be no classes, I had to make arrangements for the free day. I decided to do the round of the bookshops. If I did all the shops in one day, I could perhaps pick up a few choice editions.

On June 3—a day I am not likely ever to forget—I went out to town again, for classes had not been resumed. My way lay past the office building, and I was curious, though apprehensive, to see a fresh gathering on its steps. Several speakers were gesticulating; the whole front of the ground floor was already covered with tatzupaos, and young men were sticking on more of these below the first and even second-floor windows.

"Down with the black Party Committee! Down with the black kingdom! Down with Cheng! We shall defend Chairman

Mao! Long live the great proletarian cultural revolution! Long live Chairman Mao!" the crowd intoned.

Every fresh slogan was first called out in a single hoarse voice, and then came the thundering rejoinder. This time no one paid any attention to me.

I was back at about 7.00 p.m., without having found any of the books that I wanted. The westerling sun caught me full in the face, so that I could just make out some unusual goings-on at the gates. I was about to go in, when two young men barred my way.

"Who are you?"

I was at once surrounded by about 30 boys, dressed in patched-up and faded clothes, who seemed to be junior-year students.

"I'm a foreign student and I'm going home, to my hostel, building No. 11," I explained.

"Where is your student card?"

I did not happen to have my card with me. There was a pause. The boys stood looking at each other, not knowing what to do. At this point, the gatekeeper (the one who had stopped greeting me) ran out from his lodge and said:

"That's our student, quite sure. He's from the Soviet Union.

He's the only one here, and we all know him personally."

"So he is from the Soviet Union! You don't mean to say we have a Soviet student at the University?" They were bewildered and stared at me in amazement.

"Yes, I'm Soviet! I'm here under an international agreement."

"You may pass," they said politely, "but don't forget your card the next time."

The crowd made way for me in an organised, purely Chinese manner.

The lane was empty, but as I walked along, I could hear a sort of distant rumble that grew louder as I approached. A crowd was raging in front of the main entrance to the office building. I could hear them shouting:

"Down with them! Down! Sack them! Sack them!"

The crowd was in a state of unprecedented frenzy, storming and raving as if berserk. But orderly pickets were posted at all the doors of the building, apparently locked from within.

Suddenly, amidst the swelling tide of threats and screaming, the students, fists raised high, put their weight to a side door in an attempt to break it down. The ones who were being crushed

shrieked pitifully, but the door was strong and the assault failed.

Just next to me an ice-cream vendor was offering his wares. He was selling a sort of fruit ice-cream, which looked like a chocolate cone and was fairly cheap. I wanted to stay to see what happened, and so, without hurrying, bought myself one, unwrapped it and stood there sucking it alongside several indifferent Chinese students who had also bought ice-cream cones.

Suddenly there was a great crash, a burst of shouts, and the crowd let out a gleeful yell. The noise came from the main entrance, and everyone rushed in that direction. I followed, but did not dare go too near the building. The great copper-covered door had been forced. In a few minutes, we saw a band of young boys dragging out several men and hurling them down the stairs one by one. One was being dragged by his legs, face down; another was being pulled forward by his arms; a third was being held back, to prevent him from running away. The crowd tore at them, everyone trying to contribute a blow, a kick or a push, but since there were too many of them, they prevented each other from doing so, and only a few blows reached their mark. The captives were dismayed, their faces pale and distorted with fear. One of them had blood trickling from his mouth. They were all elderly men, and quite helpless in the grip of the young. I recognised the Party organiser and several other Committee men. They were being led away one by one towards the stadium, inside the University grounds. As the last victim was brought out of the building and taken away, the beaming and exalted young people swarmed after him with fresh cries of triumph:

"Long live Chairman Mao! Long live the victory of the great proletarian cultural revolution!"

The appalling spectacle over, I made straight for home. I took a short cut and at the corner of the hostel ran into a group of alarmed Office employees, Wang and some other men from my own floor among them.

"Did you pass the main building?" asked Kung, a serious-looking man of about 30, who was responsible for political work among the Vietnamese. "What's going on out there?"

"I don't know; I'm not supposed to look to see what's happening there; it's China's internal affair," I replied in the most innocent manner.

"Oh, come on!" Kung said in a friendly tone, implying that he quite realised. "What about the Party Committee?"

He was obviously nervous and impatient to hear what I had to say. The other men tried to look unruffled and said nothing.

"The students have broken into the office building, dragged out the Committee members, and taken over the whole building," I said in a loud voice.

They all swung round: they did not know! They plied me with questions:

"When was that? Did you see it yourself? What are they doing? What are they shouting?"

But I was not fluent enough to answer their barrage of questions at one go, and I said firmly that the students were shouting: "Long live the victory of the great proletarian cultural revolution!"

Kung thanked me in a quavering voice, and asked me whether I was going to have a rest. I said I was, and as I turned to leave them, they broke into an alarmed discussion.

The hall was also full of people, and in the corridors there was much to-ing and fro-ing, and banging of doors.

Suddenly the loudspeakers boomed:

"Comrades! Comrades! We congratulate you all! Revolutionary students and teachers of the University! The black Party Committee has been overthrown, Cheng's black band has been crushed, and the black elements are to answer before the masses! We have defended Chairman Mao! We have defended the Party CC! The black reign is at an end. The revolutionary students and teachers of the University have taken power into their own hands. Long live the victory of the great Chinese cultural revolution! Long live Chairman Mao! Glory! Glory! Glory!"

There was a click and the loudspeakers went off. But silence did not return: it was not to return again. Through the open windows I could hear a monotonous chorus of voices chanting slogans, the stamp of hundreds of feet, and when I got up to my own room, I heard the first drum strike out in a powerful low-pitched throb, which seemed to spread slowly and suffuse the air. I went to bed but could not fall asleep for a long time. Ma was not back. The pounding of the drum continued. After a while, another drum struck out somewhere in the city, and then another.

IV. THE FIRST DAYS OF THE NEW POWER

DRUMBEATS. VISIT TO PEITA. SUMMARY TRIAL AT THE STADIUM. WANG SEIZED. "HUMANENESS IS A DISEASE OF THE BRAIN". I AM QUESTIONED BY THE "REVOLUTIONARIES". CAPTIVE BEATEN UP. HOW LONG CAN A MAN STAND WITH HIS HANDS UP?

On June 4, the drums were still beating their tattoo, morning, noon and night. Sometimes the sound came from afar, sometimes it was quite close. You could not get away from it. Now and again, through the drumbeats came hoarse cries: "Long live Mao Tse-tung!", "We shall defend Chairman Mao!", "Glory to the Great Helmsman!" Then came the processions: in the University grounds, along the city streets, from one rally to another. I saw many of these pass by, watching them from a kerb. Most of the people were very young and dressed in old, patched-up clothes. There was a shuffling of bare feet and worn-out rubber shoes on the pavement.

At the head of the column, four men would usually carry a stretcher with Chairman Mao's portrait in a frame of red velvet, adorned with flowers and green twigs. Then would come the standard-bearers, carrying long and narrow snake-like pennants on high flagpoles, the light scarlet silk fluttering in the wind. These would be followed by an orchestra, including the inevitable drum and an assortment of other instruments, with the addition of a few pealing gongs. The tail end would consist of a dutiful column of people, sometimes flanked in by several activists, who would keep glancing at sheets of paper and chanting the slogans of the day. They would rattle off a slogan, and the whole column would join in in chorus, throwing up clenched fists into the air.

The University tatzupaos told of the "old Party Committee's crimes, the major one being resistance to the "great proletarian

cultural revolution". I soon found out many amazing things. Thus, when the Party Committee had been besieged by the raving crowd, they had telephoned the District Committee for help, but the latter had admitted to being quite powerless. At the City Committee headquarters there was no one even to pick up the receiver: the Committee had also been disbanded. When it had become quite obvious that their very lives were in danger, the University administration had turned for help to the police but the answer had been: "We are not interfering in the movement." The reply from the garrison was as blunt: "We are following the line of the masses." As a last resort, they had called the "Group for the Affairs of the Cultural Revolution" under the CPC Central Committee and had got the same answer: "We are following the line of the masses." That day, however, the masses were no more than two or three hundred wrought-up and bawling youngsters, who worked themselves up to a pogrom. On June 3, most of the students still did not know what was what and were not involved.

The Party machine was apparently paralysed, and the army and police were backing the rampaging young and giving them the green light. Their violence was being defended and encouraged through the workings of the powerful state machinery, although the springs that had put things in motion had yet to reveal themselves.

The victors, supported by the state's punitive machinery, were acting as executioners. They had been trusted with a new role, a role of state importance: that of checking the rise of "freaks and monsters" in China—Mao's term for those who had come out against his adventurist line. The "freaks and monsters" label, meant to justify the outrages of the "cultural revolution", was on the very first day inscribed in gilded characters on a red background and hung out at the liveliest intersections on the campus. "Freaks and monsters", Mao had said, emerged of their own accord but would never disappear of themselves, and so had to be ruthlessly rooted out.

On June 4, according to my study plan, I was to go to the Peita library. To get there, I had to take a bus at the gates of the Pedagogical University and after a half-hour trip get out at the gates of Peita.

Nearly all the office staff and even their chief Chao herself were walking about the hall and corridors, whispering together in corners in a vain attempt to hide their anxiety. Several Vietnamese were also there. Equipment officer Wang saw that

I was about to leave and told me that no one was being allowed to leave the grounds. I expressed my indignation and said they had no right to do this, but one of the Vietnamese reassured me that foreigners were free to come and go. Wang was put out and began to excuse himself:

"Is that so? I didn't know. Have you taken your papers along? You should never leave them behind!"

I assured him I had my papers with me: I had a student's badge pinned to my shirt and my student card in my wallet.

From afar I saw a crowd at the gates. Some fiercely gesticulating boys and girls were trying to get in, while others were trying to get out.

"I've got a brother over here whom I haven't seen for a long time," urged a young girl, who looked like a factory girl.

"You can't go in. Everyone here is doing revolutionary work," said a picket with a red armband. He was inexorable and behaved with much dignity. "We don't let anyone in."

"For how long?"

"For as long as the revolution requires!"

I asked the strict picket whether I could pass.

"Please do. We do not stop foreigners."

I could not help asking why they were not letting anyone out.

The picketer gave me a stern look and rapped out:

"So that not a single scoundrel should get away from retribution to the revolutionary masses!"

A man on a bicycle tried to slip out after me. I had often seen the likes of him following me wherever I went. But this time the "revolutionary" students got hold of him and dragged him away into the gate-keeper's lodge. Six youngsters held him down as he struggled and swore, and I could make out words like "duty", "instructions" and "work".

I cannot say that I was displeased at the incident, for this was obviously an agent, an ordinary plain-clothes man, one of the many whose constant shadowing so oppressed all of us foreign students in China.

At the gates of Peita there was also a crowd of people trying to get in. I pushed my way up to the picket and showed my special pass. But he politely refused to let me in:

"The library is closed, so there's no point in your coming here."

"I want to see my Soviet friends, who are students here."

He was nonplussed, and referred to another student, his superior. All this while, the gate-keeper sat passive in his box.

"Have you come here before?"

"Yes, on many occasions."

"Then you may pass. But this is last time we're letting you through: we're having a cultural revolution."

"Do you mean to say I won't be allowed to see my fellow-countrymen?"

"No, you won't, except, perhaps, at the Office. We are not to allow any strangers into the grounds, because a revolution is on. But today we are making an exception for you. Pass on!"

This was my last official visit to Peking University.

It was a windy day, and little clouds of dust, sand and scraps of coloured paper covered with illegible characters raced along the walks. All the buildings up to the second floor were papered over with tatzupaos and these rustled in the wind like tree leaves.

"Death to Lu Ping! Expose the criminals! Uncover the hide-outs of the old counter-revolutionaries!" the tatzupaos yelled out, screamed, cursed, threatened and condemned. They were addressed to definite individuals: the University's Rector, Lu Ping, professors, and members of the Party Committee. Their names were either framed in black (something like an obituary notice on a living man of whom no one was henceforth to dare think as being alive), or were crossed out in red (a call for blood) or black (a threat of death).

Columns were marching in the middle of the lane. Among the wildly enthusiastic young faces, which were already haggard from lack of sleep, I spotted some faces of another kind—pale, masque-like and elderly, with tightly closed lips. They betrayed fear, bewilderment and a hope to escape through a show of zeal.

At the entrance to the foreigners' hostel, a fresh tatzupao hung askew said: "You upstart from the intellectual bloodsuckers! You made speeches at Party meetings to flatter the black bandit Lu Ping, you wormed your way into the Party, boasted a knowledge of foreign languages, insinuated yourself into the Foreigners' Office under Lu Ping's patronage, and yourself have been living in luxury at the foreign hostel! You are a swine and a running dog of the exploiting bourgeois class! You are an office-seeker, a slave of the black band, a pseudo-Communist and an enemy of Mao Tse-tung thought! Repent! We are warning you! This is our very last warning!"

"Up to now", I thought, "those who lived with foreigners were regarded as the truest and most loyal men. What is

happening in China? This is no 'cultural revolution', but a definite political line."

Among ourselves, in our small University colony, we talked of nothing but of the goings-on around us. I heard that Professor Chien Po-tsan had been beaten up, and that Rector Lu Ping had been all but killed and saved only through being taken to hospital, and that even the Party organiser at the foreigners' dining-room had been made to put a dustbin on his head and marched on all fours.

I was back at the Pedagogical University late at night. The lanes shone with strings of lamps, but were quite deserted. From the direction of the stadium, however, I could hear the roaring of a crowd. I turned into a lane running parallel to the stadium and went along it, keeping within the shadow of the trees. The playing field was lit up with dozens of powerful searchlights and was packed with people, who squatted or sat on the ground. I managed to get quite close to the most brightly lit platform, with several people on it, whom I watched from behind a young poplar-tree. I recognised one of them as Party organiser Cheng, who stood apart in the centre of the platform. Two boys were standing at his back with solemn faces, and others were pacing the platform. Suddenly one of them went up to the footlights and swinging round to face Cheng yelled out in a piercing voice:

"You have betrayed Chairman Mao! You are a black bandit! You are the king of the University's black kingdom!"

The crowd roared, all the voices merging in a swelling tide of sound, which gradually seemed to fall apart and take on rhythm, and suddenly to my horror I realised that they were chanting: "Sha! Sha! Sha!—Death, Death, Death!"

I looked at those who were sitting nearby. They were all watching the accused, with a look of concentration and even anxiety on their faces. They watched the man intently and almost in silence, as if trying to catch a glimpse of their own future.

Suddenly at someone's command the chanting stopped, and Cheng began to speak.

"I have fought for the revolution! I have shed blood for Chairman Mao!" he implored the crowd, feverishly rolling up his sleeves and stretching out his arms, apparently to display his scars.

The young men on the platform replied by slapping him in the face and yelling: "Liar! Liar!"

"I love Chairman Mao with all my heart! I shook hands with him at Yenan!"

"Traitor!" they yelled and slapped him again.

"I have fought against revisionism and foreign slaves," Cheng let out a desperate, agonising cry.

The "young revolutionaries" roared with laughter.

"Comrades! Just hear the freaks and monsters lie! Come on, bow your head to the masses!" At this, one of the boys swiped him a heavy blow on the back of the head.

Cheng swayed, covered his face with his hands, and sank, shivering, to the floor. He threw back his arms and fell on his side in a fit of hysterics. The youngsters continued to rage over him:

"You scoundrel! You freak and monster! You black bandit!"

"Death!" cried out one of the boys, ran up to the writhing man and kicked him.

The crowd chanted: "Death! Death!", and the activists on the platform set to kicking him all together.

I felt a sickening lump rising to my throat, and trudged back to the hostel. My mind was confused, and I had a sense of nausea and disgust.

In the hall, I came across several Office employees talking together in alarmed tones. Little Wang came up to me and said with a forced smile:

"What's happening in the city outside? They're not letting us out of here."

I said that I did not notice anything special in town, and saw that they were all listening with keen attention. When I started telling them about what was going on at Peita, they all gathered round me and started asking me who had been accused over there and whether any of the minor functionaries were involved.

"It looks as though they are, and there are many of them. What about our own Office? Are there any 'freaks and monsters' over here?" I asked.

"Oh no, not yet."

They were obviously scared at what I had told them, although even before that they had appeared confused and downcast.

Ma was not in the room—he was, no doubt, at the stadium. I went to bed, but lay awake in a cold shiver, listening to the ceaseless drumbeat.

Ma never returned that night, but merely dropped in for a few minutes in the morning to ask me what I intended to do.

I said that I would perhaps go out into the city, for I would not be having any lessons.

"Our studies will always be there. But going out into the city is a very good idea. Here at the University we are having a cultural revolution, don't you see?"

"Have many been convicted?" I bluntly asked him, and the self-confident Ma suddenly faltered.

"No, not many. But why do you say 'convicted'?"

"Well, where a man is said to be a freak and a monster, doesn't that amount to conviction?"

"No! After all, not everyone says so, but only a few. Their opinion should be confirmed by the collective as a whole, by the revolutionary masses!" he replied, and as he hit on that well-tryed formula, he regained his self-confidence.

"Have they discovered any 'freaks and monsters' at our own department? Comrades Li and Kuo have not suffered, have they?"

"No, no. Although, of course, it hasn't as yet started over here in earnest," he said and went off, obviously to avoid any further discussion.

As I was getting ready for breakfast, I went out into the corridor, where things were going on as usual. Students were hustling about with towels and ping-pong rackets: ping-pong tables stood in the centre of the wash-rooms, for the Chinese usually started their morning warm-up with a game or two. Some Vietnamese students were coming down from the second and third floors. Suddenly I heard a peculiar new sound blending in with the familiar buzz of voices: a soft but distinct tread of feet, and then about a dozen boys in worn-out rubber shoes or altogether barefooted marched into the corridor. For some reason I noticed their incredibly thin arms, which looked as though the boys had been on very short rations indeed. Two of them were bringing along the elderly doorkeeper, gripping him firmly by the arms. They walked slowly and seemed to be at ease, but they were obviously excited: this was clearly their first visit to the foreigners' hostel.

"Who's this foreigner?" one of them asked, as they came abreast of me. The doorkeeper said I was Soviet, and, giving me the once-over, they went on. I heard the same voice say:

"Is he China's friend?"

"No," the doorkeeper replied, "he's a China specialist."

They stopped at the door of the room where Deputy-Head of the Office, Wang, lived.

"Is it here?" asked a tall pale boy with dark shadows under his eyes, and the doorkeeper said it was. They let him go and crowded at the door. One of them gave a cautious knock.

"What's the matter?" Wang asked from within.

"Come out!" someone said calmly.

"What's the matter?" he repeated, throwing open the door.

That very instant, a tangle of thin arms with rolled-up sleeves reached out towards him and clutched him by the neck, collar, shoulders and clothes. A moment later Wang was out in the corridor and was being led away in a firm grip.

"Come along! The masses are waiting for you! They are going to ask the questions, and you must answer! Hurry up!"

They walked rapidly down the corridor and down the stairs in total silence. Wang said nothing: he had gone pale and limp and stared at the floor. He was dressed in his new Party uniform: a blue military tunic with outside pockets, which was buttoned up to his chin, trim blue trousers and leather shoes. He must have anticipated what was in store for him and so had dressed up as though for a parade in Tien An Men Square.

All the inmates of the hostel stood at the doors of the wash-room or their own rooms and watched them go by. Only the door of the monitoring room next to me remained closed. I pushed it open out of curiosity—the room was empty. This was the first time I had been left without supervision for a night and a day.

The University Komsomol Committee outlasted the Party Committee for no more than a week: it was disbanded that very June.

As soon as the "revolutionary" students had taken over power at the University, fresh tatzupaos were put up to the effect that all the "flunkies of the black Party Committee" should be taken severely to task. This also applied to the Komsomol Committee, which was, of course, the Party Committee's chief aid at the University.

That morning the radio kept calling on all "revolutionaries" to mount an "assault". The grounds were soon deserted, for the "revolutionaries" were herding everyone together in front of the Komsomol Committee for a show of strength: the smash-up of the Committee was something of a display, a demonstration.

The brutality was wild. The Committee members were

savagely beaten up in front of the crowd and were then paraded one by one along the lanes for everyone to see. Every captive had an escort of about 20 activists, who took turns at beating him. On my way to lunch, I ran into a group of this kind.

The Komsomol member was a mere boy, perhaps in his second year—an ordinary Chinese student who looked no different from his tormentors. He was unable to walk and was being dragged along the lane, with some members of his escort supporting him, while others continued to knock him about. Any students they met expressed their loyalty to the "cultural revolution" in the usual way, by spitting at the victim, who was too helpless even to wipe it off.

"Who's that?" I exclaimed.

The activists consulted with each other and decided that a foreign student needed to have things explained to him.

"We are not making any secret of this," said the young boy who was delegated to do the explaining. "He is a member of the Komsomol Committee and toadied to the black Party Committee."

"Why are you beating him?" I insisted.

"He is guilty of spreading the black reign in this country, and he is to be tried by the masses," the Maoist calmly explained. "You yourself are still young and should see our point. He is not only an enemy, but also a traitor. Judging by his age, he could well have been one of us, for he has also grown up under Mao Tse-tung. He has had every opportunity to assimilate the Chairman's ideas, but instead he has been serving the Chairman's enemies on the Party Committee. We deal sternly with the likes of him, for they are twice—no, thrice—as guilty!"

"Have you been a Komsomol member yourself?"

"No," he proudly replied, "I have nothing to do with black organisations."

There were not very many Komsomol members at the University. But however that may be, rank-and-file members were treated much more leniently: they merely had to come out in public and denounce the exposed leadership.

That June it was not quite clear who was running the University, but the student committee, or union, had a very big say in the matter. At one time, it appointed all-powerful guards from among the activists to maintain "order". Once the Party Committee had been smashed, the Party organisation was left leaderless and did not act on its own.

The University was rapidly changing out of all recognition. There were slogans everywhere: on the pavement, on banners stretched across the lanes, and on multicoloured paper strips on the walls, to say nothing of the generous sprinkling of individual and group tatzupaos. Everywhere one had to elbow one's way through a crowd of students. Everyone was busy reading, debating or taking notes. Once I ran into a mammoth slogan stretched across a lane: "Death to black bandit Cheng!!!"

Just then I saw Ma, returning from his breakfast, and asked him what the slogan meant and whether the man was to be killed.

"One should take this in a figurative sense," he replied calmly. "The revolutionary masses are indignant at the black band and its accomplices."

I wanted to remind Ma that he had once had a different opinion of the Party organiser, but noticed that those around us were listening to our conversation, and so merely remarked that Cheng had been Party organiser for six years, and that those who had put up the slogan were just thirsting for blood and had no idea of gratitude or humaneness.

At the word "humaneness", Ma broke into a contemptuous laugh.

"You have sick brains," he said in a condescending tone. "You are narrow-minded in class terms and do not see the logic of class struggle. We divide enemies into those who are up in arms and those who are not. We are no longer afraid of the former, and the latter are now more dangerous because they want us to degenerate. They have been spreading revisionism and bourgeois ideology in red China, whereas our great leader..."

I turned upon my heel and went off, without hearing out his stock-phrase.

Having quickly got through my usual foreigner's breakfast—sour milk in a white pot-bellied earthenware jug, a quarter-litre bottle of milk, a slice of cold meat, a plate of vegetable salad and a pancake fried in oil—I was returning through the park to my hostel. There were not so many people here and it was much quieter in the lanes. Then I saw eight boys coming towards me. They were very young and very much like those who had come up to our hostel to pick up Wang. The puniest boy grandly stepped forward and addressed me, speaking slowly so that I could understand:

"We are activists of the cultural revolution in our second year, and should like to talk to you. We want to tell you that we stand for the revolution. We shall not spare our lives for the revolution! We are defending the Party CC and Chairman Mao! We are not afraid of any difficulties."

They were now talking all at once, rehearsing their hackneyed slogans.

"We also want to ask you why you were admitted to our University," continued the boy.

"I came here under an international agreement."

"We know that. But why our University in particular?"

"It was your superiors who decided that. I would have found Peita much more convenient."

"There, you see!" he cried, turning to the others. "It's the doing of the black band! They have sent a revisionist to our revolutionary University on purpose!"

The boy next to him interrupted:

"But isn't Peita a revolutionary university, too?"

"Whom have you met here?" the first youngster continued sternly.

I was amused by the conversation. The boys behaved well, while their haggard looks and worn-out clothes even evoked sympathy. They obviously did not have enough to eat: I knew that the Chinese students' daily ration consisted of a bowl of rice, a bun, and some tea. They tried to make up for the lack of food by sleeping long hours, but now they had been deprived of sleep as well, for they were carrying on a "cultural revolution".

"I have met some University administrators," I replied. "On my arrival I was received by Head of the Foreign Students' Office, Chao, and then by Liu, Deputy-Dean of the Philological Department..."

"Did Cheng receive you?" someone interrupted.

"No, he was very busy and had no time to see me."

"Never mind, now he'll have all the time he wants. Cheng Chin-wu is now answering for his crimes before the revolutionary masses. He had maintained the Soviet revisionist system at the University and wanted to bring us up as a generation of bourgeois successors. But he has failed. His black designs have been exposed! It was no accident that you have come here," the boy pursued.

"I am not in the least interested in your internal affairs," I replied as calmly as I could.

Suddenly there was a yell at the back:

"Comrades! We cannot put up with a revisionist at our revolutionary University!"

"What is your attitude to Mao Tse-tung thought?" the first boy went on.

"I stand for Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, and therefore oppose any nationalist ideas."

I had prepared my answer beforehand. First, I had made a point of not mentioning Mao Tse-tung and, second, making my answer uncompromising, for that would surely puzzle them. I proved to be right: the boys, who were not used to hearing their idol openly denounced, were taken aback. After a fairly lengthy pause, my opponent said:

"You should make a serious study of Mao Tse-tung thought, you don't know it well enough."

I merely shrugged my shoulders and moved on. They let me pass, but as soon as I left them behind, they began shouting and hurling curses at me:

"Revisionist!"

"Scoundrel! Down with the revisionists!"

Someone tried to pacify them: "Comrades, this is a matter of international agreement!"

I turned to see who it was that had regained his common sense, and it was very well I did: I just managed to dodge a flying brickbat some "cultural revolution" enthusiast had thrown at me.

I was still no more than ten yards away. They fell silent, but continued to look at me. Then a tall boy said:

"This question concerns the University collective as a whole and needs to be discussed. It has to be solved on a country-wide scale!"

"A revolutionary heart cannot stand live revisionists!" I heard someone exclaim. They fell to arguing again, shouting one another down and gesticulating furiously, and I decided to go my own way.

I was beginning to be really worried about the "cultural revolution". The stand at the intersection, which was once used for displaying the semi-official red Party Committee tatzupaos, now carried a vast sheet of white paper covered with extra-large characters. It said: "Down with the black kingdom! From 1949 to 1966, they ordered us about, sucked our blood, and betrayed our great leader, Chairman Mao, without heeding his words! They styled themselves Communists and followed the capitalist road in contradiction to Mao Tse-tung

thought!... Down with the black kingdom! Long live the great proletarian cultural revolution! Let us defend Chairman Mao!"

The wall of the physics laboratory giving on a by-lane was devoted to a topical tatzupao on the "black band's crimes". I joined a crowd of students who were reading it. My arrival caused some whispering among them but then they apparently decided to let me read it and get a correct idea of the "cultural revolution". The wall was covered with complaints and petitions from those who had been wronged by the local authorities, and accounts of their vices and abuses.

There was also a long list of the furniture in Cheng's cottage and his other belongings: just imagine, in addition to a double bed he also had a couch and a sofa for his guests! The students read this and fumed with indignation: they themselves were four in a narrow room and slept on double-decked plank-beds.

All these complaints, reports and accusations centred on the findings of a "revolutionary inquiry group", which had inspected the work of the professors' and functionaries' dining-room.

"Our professors and superiors from the black band," the report said, "had an everyday choice of 100 dishes of the feudal cuisine, which they hypocritically described as their 'national cuisine'." Then came a list of the viands consumed at the professors' dining-room over the preceding months and year: their consumption of pork and beef ran to several hundred carcasses, not to mention the thousands of ducks and chickens, hundreds of litres of oil, and tens of thousands of eggs.

The pale and wasted faces of the students were distorted with wrath. They were feverishly noting down the tell-tale figures, checking these with one another. The crowd throbbed with indignation.

Another sheet was a complaint about a "bloody crime", the suicide of a country boy who had been sent down from the University for poor progress.

A high wooden platform was erected near the library, something in the nature of a rostrum, a stage or, perhaps, a scaffold. Against the background of red banners, I saw a line of dejected-looking men in fool's caps, each holding a plywood board with a list of his "crimes". Some of them were wearing paper cloaks covered with characters, or had small plates on their chests saying "Black bandit".

Suddenly a voice behind me rapped out:

"Bow down your head!"

I turned and saw a fairly young man being led to the improvised scaffold. Two men held him by his arms, while a third kept knocking him on the back of the head. But the man would not bow down, and stubbornly kept straightening up.

Then the convoy stopped, cursing him and striking out at random. He did not resist but staggered and tried to keep his footing. The students passing along the lane closed in around him with shouts of "Scoundrel!"

The man fell, and they all started kicking him, but he did not utter a single cry or groan.

Suddenly several boys broke away from the crowd around the scaffold and came running up to him and shouting:

"He will be tried by the masses. Bring him along!"

At that commanding shout, the infuriated crowd, which only a moment ago had been beating the helpless man in a cold fury, immediately stood apart in a disciplined way, leaving the victim motionless on the pavement.

The students ran up to the faintly breathing man, ordered him to get up, jerked him to his feet and hauled him away to the platform. He made several desperate attempts to raise his head, but every time got a blow on the ear and dropped his head helplessly again. He was dragged up onto the platform and propped up against the red backdrop, but he slipped to the floor. Once again he was ordered to get up and slapped heavily on the face, but all to no effect. Then up came a hefty fellow, one of the leading activists, and set to work with an army belt. The blows brought the man to his senses, and he scrambled to his feet. A fool's cap was stuck on his head and a paper cloak thrown over his shoulders, and two youngsters at once began writing something on it in black ink. Another youngster painted over his face with white paint, dipping his brush into a big tin—in the old national theatre villains always had a white make-up.

On my way back from the club at the Soviet Embassy that same night, I was just about to show my pass at the University gates, when I was told I didn't have to.

"You needn't show it," said a lad with a red armband. "All the guards know you now. Please, come in!"

I liked that: perhaps the "cultural revolution" really had nothing to do with me.

The meeting in front of the library was still on. The accused were still lined up at the edge of the platform, holding up above their heads the plywood boards with a list of their "crimes". As I looked, the men suddenly began one by one to slump down onto the platform. The crowd gazed at them, but apparently without any surprise; no one went up to them or did anything about it. I was so shaken by the sight that I could not help asking a boy by my side with a red armband what was the matter with them.

"They have been standing like that all day long. A man, you know, cannot stand very long holding his hands up above his head, and so he falls," he willingly explained, breaking the strict ban on any conversation with foreigners. "But they're not to be pitied, for they are black bandits and traitors. They had seized power in the Party Committee and tried to turn the University into a black kingdom. But now their time is up, and the revolutionary masses will call them to account."

Here I saw several young fellows with belts in their hands climb onto the platform and start lashing at the fallen men with abandon. The men rose and fell again, while the "revolutionaries" danced about them, their belt buckles glinting in the light, and the worked-up crowd chanting its death-call:

"Sha! Sha! Sha!"

The Chinese students could not take their eyes off the stage, staring spellbound and stupefied. I wondered what was on their minds: deep down in his heart each must have feared a similar lot, the lot of those on the platform, for the revolution in China, they were told, was "eternal", and "Chaos was not to be feared". They did not know what the future had in store for them.

As a foreigner, an outsider in Chinese society, I was beginning to see the "cultural revolution" as a ceaseless, never-ending nightmare, a stage-show with the dénouement unknown.

V. EVERYDAY LIFE UNDER THE NEW REGIME

RAID ON A FLAT, A PHYSICIST, A KIND WORD.
WORK TEAM AT THE ENTRANCE, FEEDING THE "FREAKS AND MONSTERS".
ON THE LAKE, SUICIDES

The beating of drums and the milling of crowds in the lanes became commonplace. It was strange to think that the lecture rooms and laboratories plastered over with tatzupaos had once been used for study and research. Now they were only used for meetings, which went on non-stop, with or without broadcasts on the radio, but always with hoarse and frantic speakers, a turbulent general response, and cutting rejoinders.

Discussion rallies were also being held in the square in front of the library, which had become known as one of the "batlegrounds". The rallies started after sundown and continued in the glare of floodlights long into the night. Verbal battles often ended in fisticuffs, and then the crowd would raise a menacing roar as the agile red-eyed activists rushed to drag the wranglers apart.

Trials at which the accused were manhandled and their "authority" was destroyed were held at the stadium. As the numerous slogans said, the trials were meant to "destroy the authority of bourgeois education and bourgeois knowledge". So that was why the Maoists brutally abused and maltreated their victims! As they pilloried the grey-haired deans and professors and stuck fool's caps on their heads, the "revolutionaries" regarded them as guinea-pigs whose death was meant to show "the masses" that any education devoid of "Mao Tse-tung thought" was altogether worthless.

Meanwhile, the weather was fine and the mimosa-trees in the lanes had burst into bloom, filling the air with a heavy fragrance.

One day, as I was taking a walk along the mimosa-fringed lanes, I suddenly heard a deafening roar from the direction of the stadium, where someone was being tormented all the time. Instinctively I dashed behind a tree, just in time to escape the headlong rush of a wildly howling crowd which burst forth into the lane with clenched fists and tore past me, driven forward by their own yells, trampling all over the hedges and flowerbeds. The people swarmed past me, calling out various names, but I did not even try to get their meaning, merely doing my best to hold on to the tree to remain unnoticed. I was not the only one to do so: all the other people in the lane had also hurried aside to let the horde pass. The runners panted past and rushed into the entrance of a four-storeyed dwelling house for teachers and their families. Soon screams came from the open windows.

One of the stadium crowd, a thin boy gushing over with excitement, told the on-lookers:

"He is a member of the Department's Party Bureau, and hasn't left his house all this time. Hiding from the masses, you know. So, somehow we forgot to ferret him out at once, the scoundrel!"

"Ferret out" was a favourite word with the "cultural revolution" activists, and meant bringing up a man for public castigation.

Then a young voice rang out from an open window in the first floor:

"Victory! Another scoundrel ferreted out!"

A doubled-up elderly man was hurried out of the building. The "revolutionaries" at the entrance spit at him, aiming at his face, while the activists kicked him to make him step lively. Not wishing to be dragged, he hurried along to the stadium platform as fast as his feet would carry him.

The "revolutionaries" who had stayed behind at the man's flat set to work. One of them was holding forth in a clear and solemn voice on the "revolutionary" code of morals, urging the victim's family to be "ideologically re-educated". He said:

"You should help others to realise the gravity of his crimes. If his closest relatives openly denounce his crimes, this will be in line with ardent class feelings. Class feelings should be stronger than family ties, which have been left over from the old society. You should speak out for the sake of the cultural revolution and in accordance with Chairman Mao's thoughts. This will help you to save yourselves from any mistaken ideas you may have."

While he spoke, other boys, no more than adolescents, were scaling up the windows of the flat with paper and covering it with characters expressing pungent curses and abuse.

Now I knew what a sealed window meant. I had seen many of these before: every block of flats had at least one or two such windows.

I tried to stay in at the hostel as much as I could, and sat reading in my room. But, apart from going out to the dining-room, I also went out two or three times a day to fill my thermos bottle at the hot-water hydrant near the physics laboratory. One day I noticed a tatzupao on the door of the laboratory in which the laboratory assistants denounced their head for being "wrapped up in physics", "ignoring politics", and "overburdening" them with scientific work, so that they had "no time left to study Chairman Mao's writings".

Next day I saw a sheet of paper pinned to the tatzupao—the scientist's reply to the accusations. I was awed at the man's incredible courage and sense of dignity. He wrote: "I believe in physics, a science of the future as well as of the present. China needs my knowledge today, but in another 25 years the country will need it even more, while people will very soon forget Mao Tse-tung's policy and thought."

The next day, the outer walls of the laboratory carried a fresh layer of tatzupaos. The scientist's rebuff had been carefully copied out in large characters and placed right in the centre, in a black frame. Next to it was the assistants' reply in bold and handsome characters:

"Mao Tse-tung's thoughts are the sun of mankind, the summit of present-day revolutionary science. They are now winning out in China. In another year, they will conquer the whole country, and in 20 years—the whole world! They will be mankind's guiding light for ever and ever! As for you, you worthless insect, people will forget you in a few days."

I had never seen the Chinese physicist, I only knew that he had studied in the Soviet Union and had been head of the laboratory at China's Pedagogical University. But I read his courageous and dignified statement with my own eyes, and even copied it into my notebook. I am sure I can never forget it. I do not know what has happened to him, whether he is still alive, or has been torn to pieces by a fanatical crowd, but from then on the light in his laboratory was out.

The exposed and convicted "enemies of the revolution" were being "led about" the University by way of special

punishment, whose purpose, I was told, was to crush a man's dignity. This punishment was applied only to those who were known for their learning, erudition, or administrative experience, so as to strip them of their prestige and discredit the "old" or "black" culture—"revolutionary" terms that covered everything outside "Mao Tse-tung's thought". But the humiliating "leading about" procedure itself was in fact the revival of a medieval custom. On the whole, the "cultural revolution" had revived many grim and ignorant medieval customs about which I knew from the stories of the 11-13th centuries.

Here is one of the sickening scenes I was to witness.

A man surrounded by four activists was slowly moving along the lane. He was bound with ropes, with each of the four escorts holding on to the end of a rope. He was dressed in a paper cloak and a peaked paper cap painted all over with sloppy black characters, repeating over and over again words like "counter-revolutionary element", "black scoundrel", "traitor", "turtle", "dirty scum", and "son-of-a-bitch". Just behind them came a man with a big drum, keeping up a slow, measured beat. In the intervals, the victim cried out in a high falsetto:

"I am an old counter-revolutionary! I did not understand Chairman Mao's thought! I despised the revolutionary masses! I lived like a bourgeois! I betrayed the revolution every day! I truckled to the black band! I was a loyal follower of the black line!"

Behind the drummer tailed a string of about 50 youngsters, who now and again chanted eulogies to Chairman Mao or declared their resolve to carry through the "cultural revolution".

I stood on the curb and watched them pass. As they went by, the accused for some reason cried out his penitent phrases in a lower voice, so that one of the activists wheeled around and struck him a blow, shouting "Louder!"

The procession filed on, and the accused man's cries became louder.

The Chinese people love spectacles and are very musical. Hence, everything that the "revolutionaries" did was dramatised and looked like a carefully staged performance or a solemn religious rite.

Work teams were another kind of punishment, but these had nothing theatrical about them. Once I ran across such a team in the University grounds. I was walking towards the northern entrance along a lane leading past the hostels. The lane was

almost empty, except for several guards with red armbands, mostly girls, about 18 or 20. As I was passing them, I saw some men and women pottering about on the other side of the lane. It was a team of convicts cleaning the gutter.

They were old men and women, and had plates covered with disgraceful inscriptions tied round their necks. They squatted, weeding the grass and shrubbery with small rakes, and cleaning away withered leaves, bits of paper and other litter. I stopped in dismay: it was inconceivable that old people in China should be humiliated in this way. A girl guard came up to me and said with an amiable smile that I could pass. I asked her who the people were.

"They are enemies of the revolution, idlers and blood-suckers. They are unworthy of being called people," was the firm reply.

I went up to a crouching old woman with red watery eyes, who looked well over 60, and read the inscription on her plate: "Relative of a counter-revolutionary element."

"But the old woman herself is not a counter-revolutionary, is she?" I asked the girl.

"How can she be anything but a counter-revolutionary?" she stared. "Her son is a major black bandit and was Chairman Mao's enemy within the Party!"

Here an older boy, apparently in charge of the guards, came up and offered to accompany me. I followed him.

All along the lane there were pale and silent old people working busily in the gutters.

At the end of the lane, another girl guard came up to us and pointed to a stooping figure:

"This old woman is not working hard enough."

The young man left me, went up close to the old woman and exclaimed, but without much spirit:

"Come on! Hurry up!"

There was no threat but only a weariness in his voice. Nor did he strike the woman, although he had a good pretext: after all, these days you did not need any pretext at all to strike or spit at an accused. The girl guard gave him a puzzled look: it seemed she knew her "Mao Tse-tung thought" much better than he did. She wanted some sound punishment inflicted on the disobedient old woman, and the look on her broad face showed that she was dead sure she was right. Her chief realised that he had better explain his behaviour.

"I am accompanying a foreigner," he said, "a Soviet trainee."

Indeed, it looked as though he had been ashamed to hit the woman in my presence, but the girl was more belligerent.

"What does it matter? I don't agree! We should carry on the cultural revolution instead of paying heed to foreigners, to say nothing of revisionists!"

The young man was clearly alarmed by her fierce criticism and hurried me away. At the first by-lane he stopped and suggested I should turn off, since there were no work teams in that direction.

On my way to the laundry, I had to pass a primary school. As I walked past the fence and watched the children playing gaily in the yard, I was overtaken by two schoolboys, apparently 7th-graders.

"Greetings, Soviet friend!" one of them said without stopping. "We remember our friendship and love the Soviet Union!"

His face was grave and he did not look back at me but straight in front of him.

Running along in front of me, they suddenly looked back and called out in Russian: "Friendship!"

It was a word I had longed for.

On my way back to the hostel one day, I saw a slogan over the doorway which said: "Anti-revisionist Building".

That was something new. But what could it mean? I decided simply to ignore it.

An Office employee came up to me in the hallway and asked me whether I had read the inscription. I said I had.

"Any remarks?"

"No, it is none of my business. I'm a foreigner, you know, and your internal affairs have nothing to do with me at all," I replied curtly, to prevent any further questions of this kind.

Everything proved to be very simple. Once the Office chiefs had been ousted, the junior employees decided to dissociate themselves from the former by putting up that slogan and going in for "revolutionary" activities. They held one meeting after another, crowding the former head's room, and passed many "great" resolutions.

One of these, I discovered from a notice on the wall, proposed the urgent erection of a board with Mao Tse-tung maxims at the hostel entrance. The notice was apparently meant as an invitation to foreigners to take part in the "sacred rites", but no one volunteered.

Then they brought in a team of convicts. As I was coming back from the dining-room, I saw them digging holes. It was hot. A young guard was lazing under the porch roof, bandying words with the old doorkeeper. I greeted them and asked the guard what was to be built there.

"We shall sink in two poles, nail some boards to them, cover these with red cloth, and over it write Chairman Mao's sayings in gold characters," he willingly explained. "It will be very grand, beautiful and majestic."

I asked him what the sayings were, but it turned out that he had forgotten. Some painters, he said, were to come over the following day and write them in.

"What are these people?" I asked my usual question.

"Counter-revolutionaries and landowners," he replied.

Indeed, one of the diggers had a white cloth tag on his chest saying "landowner element".

"So you are a landowner," I addressed the convict. "What were you before the 'cultural revolution'?"

The man—a pale and haggard elderly man, dressed in badly fitting overalls—just stood there looking helplessly now at me, now at the guard.

"Go on, tell him!" the guard gave his gracious permission.

"I used to be a member of the Party Bureau at the History Department," he timidly replied.

"Do you mean to say you'd been a landowner before Liberation?"

"No, before Liberation I was with the Eighth Army."

"But when were you a landowner?" I insisted naively.

"I've never been one, but my father had some land and was considered a landowner. I myself had always taken part in the revolution."

Here the guard interrupted him.

"It says here about his social origins," he tapped the tag on the man's chest. "He comes from a class that is hostile to the people. His parasitic habits—what we call revisionism in China—have now told on the whole of his activity."

"Are you a Party member yourself?" I asked the guard.

"No, but I belong to the young generation of the Mao Tse-tung epoch!" he said with unabashed smugness.

"But look here, this man became a Communist before you were even born, at a time when the Kuomintang reactionaries were putting people to death for being Party members. As long ago as that he was already risking his life for the sake of the

revolution!" I said, venting some of my indignation over this kind of barefaced stone-wall demagoguery.

The guard was unruffled, looking down on me with the lofty air of a real victor. Calling out to his team to step lively, he faced me again and remarked:

"You foreigners cannot understand China; you never have and you never will. Back in the Soviet Union you are regarded as a specialist on China, aren't you?"

I said I was, and he sniggered.

"Of course, I know there are only a few foreigners who know Chinese. That makes all of you specialists," he gave me a sly smile. "Do you know what Premier Chou said about you? You don't? Well, our Premier Chou has said that foreign experts on China...;" he gave a meaningful pause, "...that they are learned certified lackeys of US imperialism and modern revisionism. But the main thing, he says, is that they are being kept to forecast events in China. Well, not one of their forecasts has ever come true! That's what Premier Chou says. And what about yourself? Did you know we were going to have a cultural revolution?"

I admitted I had not.

"There, you see!" He was proud and happy. Then he took up another idea:

"Intellectuals are apt to give way to impulses, but they are incapable of standing fast: once the revolution has won out, they want to live high and do themselves well in everything."

"Isn't that what a revolution is all about? Isn't it meant to improve the people's life?"

"Revolution is carried out for the sake of revolution! It is eternal, and China will always be a revolutionary country. A better life is a life lived for the triumph of Mao Tse-tung thoughts. The revolution enables the masses to master Mao Tse-tung thought, and that is what matters most!"

"In other words, revolution is carried out for the sake of Mao Tse-tung 'thought'?" I said, meaning the question to be ironical.

"You cannot understand this, for your consciousness is infected with modern revisionism," he declared.

I did not want to go into this any deeper and asked him about the meaning of "counter-revolutionary element", the tag of another convict.

"I, too, was a Party member and came out against the cultural revolution," said the owner of the tag drily.

"He is one of those who have admitted their guilt," the guard remarked complacently. "He used to be considered a professor."

"What are you going to do with all of them?" I asked the guard as calmly as I could.

"We haven't decided yet. They have been accused, but sentence has yet to be passed. For the time being, we have been reforming them through manual labour. You can see for yourself that the work isn't hard, but it's very useful ideologically, because it shows them very well the greatness of Mao Tse-tung thought. This is a very important means of re-education! Later on, each case will be considered at a special meeting which we call a trial, because any member of the collective has the right to expose their evil doings. But apart from work, we have already started re-educating them, by changing their living conditions. We have evicted them from their flats, confiscated their belongings, and suspended their wages. They now live all together, and we have been protecting them from the wrath of the masses. The magnanimity of the revolutionaries is boundless! These people now live in almost the same conditions as many peasants, China's ordinary people."

"But why do you seek to humiliate them, spit at them, and beat them up?"

The guard thought awhile before answering. "This is a class struggle, and they are our class enemies. How can a class enemy have any human dignity? It's ridiculous! We don't regard them as people at all. In the 17 years since Liberation, they have had excellent opportunities to be re-educated into Chairman Mao Tse-tung's loyal followers, but they have refused to do so. On the contrary, they have followed a black line, established a black kingdom in China, and were looking forward to the time when China would lose its red colour. So now we have to humiliate them. The old society made a cult of worthless knowledge, and now we have to purge the minds of the masses of any admiration for the useless knowledge of the old intelligentsia. That is why we parade them about to the beat of drums wearing the peaked caps of ignominy. Let everyone see how helpless and ridiculous they are, for all their much-vaunted science! Remember their former insolence, their brazen refusal to study Chairman Mao's writings! They dared to scoff at us, the rising revolutionary generation. They did not realise that Mao Tse-tung's writings are the summit of human thought!"

I had started speaking with this boy because he had not looked so fanatical as the others, in the hope of hearing some common-sense words and reasoning, but he was treating me to yet another helping of stock propaganda.

While we argued, the team were digging away much faster: they were no doubt listening attentively, but feigning an absorbed interest in their work. As I was going away, not a single head was turned in my direction.

I usually went out to have my lunch about twenty minutes after the Vietnamese students. After all, there were nearly a hundred of them, they made a long queue, and took up all the seats. At the foreigners' dining-room there was a chef who specialised in European dishes, and he had now become something of a personal chef of mine: I was his only customer. But I preferred Chinese food and my only European dishes were milk and sour milk. I always came in to lunch at one and the same time, and never had to wait: my food would at once be served on a tray—a very comfortable arrangement, for I valued my time.

One day, the Vietnamese had had an outing and were a little late for lunch, so that when I came into the dining-room there were still some people at the service counter.

The woman who was ladling out the soup asked me to wait. To while away the time, I strode along the row of windows and out into a dark corridor, which led to the dining-room office. I heard the clicking of an abacus in one of the rooms, and wandered past a pair of scales used for weighing out the food, a huge pile of cabbage-heads, and bunches of greens for the following day's lunch lying in rows along the wall. The corridor opened into a well-lit hall, once the dining-room of the professors and Party functionaries. I stopped on the threshold and looked about me.

Many young people mingled with the teachers and other elderly men. Students with red armbands supervised the doling-out of food and kept an eye on the cooks. At the farther end of the room there was a newly cut opening in the wall marked: "For freaks, monsters and all the other scoundrels of the University." Several men and women with tags on their chests were queued up at the window for their food with aluminium bowls, while others wended their way between the tables and the lunchers from the entrance at the other end of the hall. One of them came in with the air of an ordinary man, but was immediately brought to heel by a loud command:

"Bow down your head, scoundrel!"

The offender did not wait to be told twice, but he was too late: one of the lunchers tripped him up, another pushed him in the back, while a third—a young man sitting straight in front of me—rose deliberately and, as the man passed by him, spat full in his face.

Having got their dollop of pickled cabbage and a round bun the colour of asphalt, the accused hurried away from the dreaded spot to have their food outside in solitude. They tried to slip away unnoticed, but even on their way out they were showered with blows and abuse.

"Death to the spongers!"

"There's no point in feeding freaks and monsters!"

"We're wasting our food!"

"Let's destroy all the villains throughout the country!"

The curses and angry cries intermingled with shouts of triumph:

"Long live the great cultural revolution!"

"Long live Chairman Mao!"

All this was very much like a witches' sabbath in a play. Not that their efforts to re-educate the "freaks and monsters" prevented the young revolutionaries from stowing away their rice, scooping out the noodles and clattering their spoons on the soup bowls.

I felt a polite touch on my elbow. It was Li, the chef, addressing me with an amiable smile.

"I have been looking for you everywhere. Your lunch is ready. There's no need to stand here."

"I was just whiling away the time." I explained to be on the safe side.

On week days, Yihoyuan Park is the quietest spot in the city. It is a favourite Sunday resort of Peking's working people, but on weekdays only visitors from other towns go there. It is such a pleasure to take a boat out on the great lake and lie tanning in the sun. The Chinese themselves do not care for suntanning: they have such an abundance of sun that they take it for granted and are used to avoiding it. They find it funny to see a foreigner sunning himself and only an occasional young Chinese will be seen without his jacket and singlet on a bright day.

The park's palaces, temples, bowers, bridges and pavilions were all built at the turn of the century, under the Empress Tshui, the last autocratic ruler of the Manchu dynasty. She had employed the best artists and architects to work on the

park. The palace was a repository of curious, valuables, treasures, and various masterpieces of applied art. Yihoyuan is pleasant in any weather, even when it rains, for you can follow the painted galleries running along the lakeside, and look out upon the vast lake, the meticulous landscaping, the islets, archways, and gilt rooftops.

You can cross the lake in a boat there and back in about two and a half hours. I used to lie back in the boat to enjoy the morning sun and the perfect stillness, unbroken, save for the roar of the planes at a near-by airfield. For me stillness meant no drums pounding away, no monotonous chanting of slogans in the manner of Buddhist incantations.

The broad lake ended in a quaint white-stone bridge with a pavilion—erected on the whim of the old empress—an outlet leading to another, smaller lake with many bays and a swelling peninsula that jutted out into the water, lake fringed with trees and shrubbery and not very much like an urban park.

As my boat glided into the shadow of the bridge, someone hailed me in English from above. It was a Chinese student in eye-glasses leaning over the parapet with a book in his hand. I called back that I was Russian, and he ran down gaily to greet me. I pulled up to the shore.

He said he regretted he could speak no Russian. He himself was from Inner Mongolia and knew Mongolian. In Peking he had first studied Russian, and had then switched to English and now to Spanish. The student complained that he had not gained a sound enough knowledge of any language, except Mongolian, which was half-native to him. Still, he said a few disconnected words in fairly clear Russian.

I was just about to step out onto the shore when there was a splash of oars behind me. I turned round and saw two thick-set broad-shouldered men in white pongee suits pulling steadily towards us. When I turned back to look at my amiable companion, he had already vanished.

I rowed on slowly along the shore and then clear across the lake to a jetty on the other side. Here I was hailed again, this time by an elderly man in plain blue overalls, who said he was a life-guard. He drew alongside, and when I told him I was Soviet, he kindly suggested that I should take a swim in the lake. But the water was too muddy, and I said I would rather not.

So we just had a pleasant chat about the simple, everyday things of life. He willingly told me about the species of fish being bred in the lake, the bait they took, and the best fishing

spots. In the sixty years, he said, some of them had grown to be very big. The fish were netted to supply the best restaurants, but the older and bigger ones knew how to avoid the net and had to be caught with fishing rods, which was not easy either: the fish here were well-fattened and choosy, and you had to know the kind of bait they took, for their tastes changed with the weather. If you wanted to fish in the park, you had to buy a ticket and on your way out pay for any fish weighing more than a kilogramme. The man-made lake, dug out to please the empress, was vast but shallow. A new canal had recently been made to feed the lake with running water, so that now the whole body of water was being renewed every three days.

I usually left the park feeling happy and reassured. It was always a pleasure to have a bowl of steaming jasmine tea or cold sour-plum stew in the old square courtyard near the gates. The park was still a delightful nook, life in the city still ran its untroubled round, and the "cultural revolution" was taking place only in the universities.

Rumours of suicides were afoot at the University. It was being said that a functionary of the smashed-up Peking Committee had drowned himself in the rapid waters of the new canal which emptied into Lake Yihoyuan. I also heard that a lecturer in Marxism-Leninism, after being pilloried for days before a crowd of raging "revolutionaries", had not been able to stand the abuse and had thrown himself into a well. Rumour is one thing, however, but actually seeing this kind of thing happen is something else again.

One day, as I was passing the office building, a favourite rallying spot, I noticed something unusual about the meeting that was being held in front of it. The speaker was addressing the crowd from the main stairway, as on the day of the storming of the Party Committee, but the people were behaving in an odd way, moving about and standing on tiptoe to peep over the shoulders of those in front. It turned out that they were all trying to have a look at the body of a student, a thin, shabbily dressed youth. Everyone was heatedly talking about his death, paying scant attention to the shouting orator. The student had been an orphan and, what worried the "revolutionaries" most of all, had come from a poor peasant family. I found out later that during the civil war he had been picked up by a political commissar of the People's Liberation Army, when his unit had taken over the boy's village. The boy had fitted well into his new family, was adopted, went through

school and, with the help of his adoptive father, entered the University. Once out of the army, the commissar was sent to work and study at Peking Pedagogical University, where he became a prominent member of the Party organisation, and was now ranked among the "big black bandits". The "revolutionaries" were saying that while the Peking Party Committee headed by Peng Chen was a "black shop", the University's Party Committee was a "black stall". When the young man's adoptive father had been condemned at one of the meetings, the boy was urged to renounce him, but had refused. What is more, he even referred to his own poor-peasant origin—as a last, though feeble trump-card—in an effort to vindicate the accused. But that was something no one could get away with.

"We were forced to denounce the son himself," rattled on the speaker on the stairway, "but it was with a heavy heart that we set out to fight a class brother duped by the class enemy. We wanted him to see the light and to realise the kind of life he had led, but he persisted in his error, putting personal gratitude above class gratitude. He refused to see that he did not owe his lot to the traitor of the revolutionary masses, but to our great leader, Chairman Mao, who has liberated the Chinese people and has rallied us to the great cultural revolution. We had a six-hour debate about him at the meeting and realised that he had degenerated into an enemy and was unable to bow his head before the masses and set an example for the others, he was unable to champion Chairman Mao's great thought! And here is a proof that we are right! He has leaped out of a window because of his hatred for the revolution and his fear of the masses! He died in order to harm the cultural revolution, but as all of you now see, he has failed in his vicious design! He has done the revolution no harm at all but has, on the contrary, shown everyone that he was an enemy. There is no longer any doubt about that. By committing suicide he has also proved another point, he has proved that even by dying, the enemies of the cultural revolution are powerless to prevent Mao Tse-tung thought from winning over the Chinese people!"

The speaker positively swelled with self-assurance and poured forth torrents of demagogy, but this did not have the usual effect on the audience. The meeting was an unusual one, without any ovations and shouts of "glory be", without the habitual bellowing roars. People went up to the body to take a look and talked together in hushed voices. There was no sign of the mass frenzy, which I had found to be the most terrifying thing about these "revolutionary" meetings.

I had always had a feeling of sympathy for the Chinese and had been glad to be friends with those of my own age. But the "cultural revolution" had made me think. The young people at the University had cast aside their books, and were abusing their grey-haired elders and deriding all knowledge and science itself. These amiable and polite young people had now become ruffians and lynchers. This was a very bitter thought, but I tried to account for their behaviour by saying to myself that they were a mere cat's-paw of someone else's evil will. The real blame fell on those who had unleashed these wild instincts, doing so deliberately and on a country-wide scale, turning some into the victims of violence and corrupting those who resorted to violence.

At close range it was hard to see the hidden political strings being pulled behind the backs of the wrought-up crowd. Who was masterminding the "cultural revolution" and how? Gradually the picture was beginning to fill out. The "revolutionaries" felt that they had the powerful backing of the state, which was giving them a free hand and letting them act with impunity. Like a malignant growth, the "cultural revolution" spread out to the country's vital organs and destroyed them, while the brain, the CPC Central Committee, encouraged the "revolutionaries" step by step. Any act of hooliganism was now justified, and men were being abused as a matter of course. Not a single soldier or policeman dared to interfere with the unruly mob that was being encouraged from above. The Chinese demagogues were quite right in saying that "the world has never seen anything like the Chinese cultural revolution": indeed, it was unparalleled in the harm and suffering it was inflicting.

VI. THE "WORKING GROUP": TRIUMPH AND DISGRACE

CEREMONIAL ENTRY. THE "OPPORTUNISTS" AND THE "LEFTISTS", CONFUSED EXTREMIST. "CHAIRMAN MAO IS BACK!"—CHIANG CHING SPEAKS. THE ROUT

Poles were put up along the lanes, wires stretched between these, and rough bast mats fastened to the wires, making handy holders for tatzupaos, which were on display everywhere in mind-boggling numbers. The lanes soon looked very much like corridors with tatzupao walls. But there was never enough space on the matting, so that some of the sheets curled over onto the ground and had to be read squatting down. The readers were always many, reading away ravenously and even managing to take notes, often with a dazed sort of look on their faces.

That summer there was an unusual number of squally showers, which were good for the crops and also washed away the dirty tatzupaos. But no matter: the morning sun was never given a chance to dry the yellow matting, for the "cultural revolution" enthusiasts were quick to scrape off the ragged sheets and paste on fresh ones. More and more of these clamoured for someone's "death", "destruction", and exposure of fresh "crimes", with black characters dancing all over the sheets and "bloody deeds" depicted in red. They attracted thousands of attentive readers. When put down on paper, these threats were no joke. Who was to be the next butt of the "cultural revolution" blows?

I remember the last few days of June for the brilliant illumination at night and the gleam of lights in the puddles on the wet black asphalt of the lanes. The rallying crowds were often driven off the stadium by gusts of rain, and swarmed to the

hangar-like student dining-rooms. The University was wide awake long into the night, everyone reading tatzupaos and notices posted at the intersections. "Another step of the cultural revolution at our University: a fresh important tatzupao up at the Physics Department, Lecture-room No.... Revolutionary students and teachers! Be sure to read it without delay!"

As I was returning home one morning, leaping over the puddles left by a recent shower, I heard the sounds of some unusual rejoicing coming from the distant student dining-rooms, with burst upon burst of greetings and applause. Suddenly the narrow lane between the two rows of tatzupao matting swelled with running and yelling students. They pressed forward in a solid body, thrusting me aside onto the curb. In the thick of the wildly enthusiastic crowd I could make out the slow purring movement of two black, heavily curtained limousines of the kind used by Chinese Government officials. I could not see who was inside, but the students were wild with enthusiasm, pushing and jostling their way to the cars, in an effort at least to touch their shining black bodies. It was some time before I struggled my way across the lane and got back to the hostel. Festive tatzupaos had been hung out all over the place with messages of greetings: "Heart-felt greetings to the leading comrades from the new City Committee! Heart-felt greetings to the leading comrades from the CPC Central Committee!"

The "revolutionaries" took up their positions along the lanes in two solid blue lines. To the beat of drums and the thunder of applause, the black cars carrying the new University officials drove through the red-draped gateway, glided softly along the corridor of men, and came to a halt in front of the office building. "Old and merited revolutionaries"—those who had taken part in storming that building and smashing the former Party Committee on June 3—came out to greet them. A red streamer over the entrance said: "Welcome to the 'working group' sent over by Chairman Mao!" The crowd broke into a chant: "Long live the 'working group'!"

Chang, the head of the "working group"—an elderly man in blue Party uniform—emerged from the first car. He was authorised to lead the "working group" because he had been a Deputy-Minister and a member of the State Council's Party organisation, which had been independent of the "black City Committee". The other members of the group, now getting out of the cars, were in military uniform. Being army men, they,

too, had been outside the ambit of the City Committee, whose overthrow the CC had sanctioned. The members of the "working group" stood together at the entrance of the building won over by the "cultural revolution", answering the greetings of the young. The crowd was already closing in around the "group" in anticipation of a meeting, when Chang suddenly made a sign with his hand and said:

"The 'working group' sent down here by the Party CC is always together with the revolutionary masses! It is not fitting for us to work in this place!"

He strode resolutely away from the office building, and his subordinates followed two by two. The crowd raised a deafening triumphal shout and rushed after the new leaders, away from the splendid six-storey building, jostling and trying to run ahead of each other.

The organisers of the reception were thrown into confusion. They ran up to consult the resolutely marching chief, and by the time they reached the end of the lane everything had been discussed and agreed upon. The "working group" filed past my own doorway, along the side of the foreigners' hostel, and stopped at the entrance to an ordinary student hostel.

That was a most spectacular move. Chang mounted the porch and declared:

"We shall work wherever you invite us!"

The whole University was in turmoil. Sentries with red armbands were posted all around the new administrative residence and in the lanes, including the one that led to the dining-room, so that I now had to walk past the sentries. Red bunting gave the hostel entrance a festive appearance. A banner stretched out above it screamed in giant letters: "Long live the great proletarian cultural revolution!", and two other inscriptions on either side said: "Long live the 'working group' sent over by Chairman Mao!" and "Long live the CPC! Long live the Party CC! Long live Chairman Mao!" To one side of the entrance they put up huge portraits of the two Chairmen: Chairman of the Republic Liu Shao-chi and Party Chairman Mao Tse-tung. These were wreathed with flowers and laurel branches. The approaches to the residence were studded with tatzupao stands and ceremonial stands with Mao quotations and official Party slogans.

The sudden booming of a giant drum, followed by the rattle of two smaller ones and the clang of gongs, marked the start of a ceremonial rally which lasted all day. All the Office employees had gone there together with the students. I was

about to drop in at the Office on some trifling business, but found the man in charge just locking the door.

"We are now subordinate to the CC 'working group'," he explained, "and must all attend the welcoming rally."

There was a long succession of speakers: "cultural revolution" activists and spokesmen representing various departments, laboratories and year-groups climbed on to the platform to show that they were in attendance. A man from the Office also spoke.

Between the speeches the orchestra would break out into peals of music. The crowd in front of the residence kept milling about, with people coming and going and red banners fluttering in the wind. As night fell, the floodlights were turned on. The crowd increased, and soon the whole University was gathered at the residence. Chang mounted the rostrum. Over the hoarse loudspeakers in my corridor I could hear the roar of the crowd, the cascades of applause, and the ecstatic pounding of drums.

I leaned out of a window in the deserted corridor, Chang was speaking from the rostrum with a stern look on his face. He said that the "cultural revolution" had now won out and it was time to establish a new, revolutionary order and discipline.

"Everyone guilty of the black line and the terrorism of the black kingdom will have to answer personally for their guilt.

"Let us unite our revolutionary ranks!

"Let us give a fitting reception to our Party's anniversary"¹

He spoke in a calm, loud voice to the sound of rapturous shouts and surges of applause, punctuated with drumbeats. He ended on this note:

"The cultural revolution has won out! Long live the victory of the great proletarian cultural revolution!"

It was one of those sweltering Peking nights, and I found myself gasping for breath, not quite able to believe that the "cultural revolution" was at an end and that the convulsions racking China would now cease all of a sudden, as if they had never taken place at all. A new slogan was carried past beneath my windows urging everyone to attend the July 1 demonstration.

The demonstration started early in the morning. By eight o'clock everyone had already lined up in a mammoth winding column. Drums were beating all along the line, and here and

there groups of students burst into song. Bees of inquisitive children flitted to and fro. At the head of the column, men carried a huge portrait of Mao Tse-tung and behind that one of Liu Shao-chi, followed by banners and slogans. Next came the "working group", its members still dressed in military uniform but with red cards marked "working group" pinned on the left side of their tunics. The column snaked past the new centre, the "working group's" residence, and wove along the University lanes, alley-ways and quadrangles in the most intricate patterns, just stopping short of cutting across itself. The demonstration never actually got beyond the gates, and marked the Party anniversary by trudging round in circles. There was something sinister in that meaningless marking of time.

I was just about to go out, when Ma came into the room. He had been allowed to stay away from the demonstration, and I asked him to come along with me to the shop. To get there, we had to cross the column at four points. Ma would politely request the demonstrators to let us pass, stretch forth his arm to make way, and the two of us would slip through to the other side, the gap immediately closing up behind us.

"So the cultural revolution is over, isn't it?" I asked him casually.

"The cultural revolution has won out," he answered calmly, "but it is too early to say that the revolution is over: it has merely entered its organisational period."

During the silence hour one afternoon everyone was taking a rest—for the first time in a month: after all it was a holiday. Although it was the hottest time of the day, I decided to make a leisurely round of the city bookshops before there were too many people. The University grounds were deserted, and even at the "working group's" residence there were only two drowsy young girls with red armbands whiling away the time on a bench at the entrance, and a boy busy putting up a fresh tatzupao on an electric-light pole. The tatzupao was neither welcoming nor ceremonial, but said in bold black characters:

"We have a question to ask of the 'working group', a question concerning Right-wing opportunism! Why had the black Party Committee's hangers-on been allowed to join the revolutionary masses in the demonstration to mark the CPC's glorious anniversary? Who has set at large the freaks and monsters denounced by Chairman Mao? We know who has. It is only Right-wing opportunists who could have done so, despite Chairman Mao's thought. This is a warning to the

¹July 1 is the anniversary of the CPC's foundation.

Right-wing opportunists! This is a grave warning to them!! Afterwards it will be too late!!!"

The long row of exclamation marks was followed by the punchline slogans:

"Down with Right-wing opportunism! Let us defend Chairman Mao! Let us carry on the great cultural revolution to the end!"

When I was returning home that night, that tatzupao had gone: it had been scraped off. That had been a dangerous step and had no doubt been authorised by the "working group" itself.

A giant notice had appeared near the student dining-room, officially announcing the resumption of studies. The gist of the long and involved text was this: "Comrades! Let us study in the mornings and carry on the cultural revolution in the afternoons! Let us walk on both feet, those of revolution and production." The young people clustering round the notice seethed with dispute and contradiction. One group opposite the notice were holding a meeting, with the speaker perched on a poplar branch, and his friends below holding up a slogan: "Long live the 'working group' sent over by Chairman Mao!"

A man with a tin of black ink dangling from his neck stole up to the notice and scribbled underneath it: "Down with Right-wing opportunism!" The crowd raised an ear-splitting din, he was immediately seized and dragged to the residence, but he struggled and kicked, gasping out the words: "Long live Chairman Mao!"

The scuffles round the notice went on day after day. It was forbidden to write anything across it, but those who were opposed to the resumption of studies pasted strips of paper with Mao's sayings all around it, pointing red arrows at the "working group's" poster to show that it was out of line with Mao's "thought".

The number of tatzupaos was again on the increase. Most of these came under headlines pledging the authors' "loyalty to the 'working group' sent over by Chairman Mao". But there was also a growing opposite trend, whose members issued a huge declaration against the "working group", urging everyone to "heed only the highest instructions! Obey only the highest instructions! Work and live in the spirit of the highest instructions!"

The "highest instructions" was a "Leftist" term for Mao's words, directives and writings. The "Leftists" came out openly against the "working group" and refused to obey any of its

orders. At their debate rallies at night they rent the air with wild catcalls, but remained in a minority.

Meanwhile, the "working group" had grown to something like 40 men. They had taken off their military uniforms, pinned on little red cards, and were ubiquitous. In fact, there were now so many of them that they called themselves the "working commission".

A new propaganda poster, "Who Are the Leftists?" spelled out the views of the commission's opponents. Briefly, the "Leftists" held that the "cultural revolution" had yet to be completed, demanded that the accused should be "dealt with" at once, and wanted to do more than just struggle against individuals. They urged a review of the whole education setup. They soon fell to contesting every single measure proposed by the "working commission".

When the commission tried to carry out its decision on resuming studies, the "Leftists" refused to obey. What is more, gangs of them would come to the lecture-rooms, beat up the professors and drive out any students who differed. In the lanes one met more and more bruised and bandaged students fresh from some scuffle or other.

The commission disbanded the "work teams", allowed the accused to take off their fool's caps and tags, and forbade any beatings or maltreatment. The "Leftists", however, became even more furious in their attacks on the convicts, beating them up ruthlessly in the lanes and at meetings, and staging mob-trials, so that the students on duty and commission supporters had to intervene to save their lives. At all the public show-trials the "Leftists" demanded death for the convicts.

"Chairman Mao has called on us to be thrifty and economical. We have already rounded up the scoundrels responsible for the black kingdom. But why feed the parasites? Death to the criminals!"

I once stopped in a lane to watch a scuffle around a rostrum with some convicted men. The "Leftists" charged at the rostrum with yells of "Death! Death!", but not being able to overcome the resistance of the activists on duty, set to hurling brickbats at the convicts. A few steps away from me stood a convict, an elderly man, who was to be taken out onto the rostrum when his turn for being victimised came up. The pale and trembling man kept muttering:

"I can't stand it! No, I can't! I prefer to die right away!"

Two activists held him in a firm grip, coolly waiting for the tussle to end so as to change the prisoners.

The man gave me a dull, empty look, all the while twitching and crying:

"I'm not guilty! I've nothing to do with it! What is it you want of me? What's the charge against me? What else do you want to tell me? I'll be waiting, tell me all you want to. And then I'll ask you again whether you have any more questions. I'll be the last to speak and will answer all your questions. I'm sure I can answer all your questions! I'm not guilty of anything, I haven't made any grave mistakes, I haven't any crimes on my record!"

No one interrupted him, so he grew bolder.

"I've never been in charge of anything, I've never been elected to any post!" he cried out.

Suddenly the guard on duty turned to me and explained: "His ideology is rotten, you know." His tone was unexpectedly confidential, as if he was trying to win me over to his side. The sight was a revolting one.

The commission ordered the tearing down of any "Leftist" tatzupaos containing "demagogic slander about the Party CC's commission". Where a tatzupao could not be designated as slanderous, it was left hanging for no more than three days. Around the tatzupao stands, the "Leftists" were constantly starting brawls and scuffles with pro-commission activists.

Finally came the last straw. At a floodlit general meeting one night, commission Chief Chang delivered a thunderous speech. He said:

"Call the demagogues to account! The revolution will not spare the bawlers! Call the political speculators to account! We shall not allow anyone to make a career out of the cultural revolution!"

Most of the students and teachers came out in support of the commission, but the "Leftists" heckling soon grew into a wild wail, so that even the radio-relay system had to be turned off.

Next morning there was a fresh surge of tatzupao-writing. This time, however, many of these started out by saying that the author had never written any before, this being his first tatzupao since the start of the "cultural revolution". Another new element was that many of these tatzupaos had been written by Communists, as the signatures said. They gave exact figures to show how many times each of the demagogues had spoken at meetings, how many tatzupaos he had posted up, and how many show-trials he had taken part in, all indicating that he had striven to make a career and rise to higher office.

One student, who had been expelled the previous spring for poor progress but who had come back at the start of the "cultural revolution" to settle scores with the administration, was now accused of having written 170 "demagogic tatzupaos". There had never been so much noise before. The Office employees had also regained some of their spirit, and were once again hustling about with a busy look on their faces, their voices booming along the corridors.

"Well, how's the struggle going?" I asked one of them, Hsui, when I met him in the corridor.

"Not bad! We've been restoring revolutionary discipline," he replied curtly, as he hurried along.

All this time, I saw virtually nothing of Ma.

Rows of anti-"Leftist" tatzupaos lined the lanes, but the "Leftists" were not to be put down. They retaliated by pasting up Mao quotations all around their opponents' tatzupaos, and accused them of "betraying Chairman Mao's thought".

A few days later, the commission put up an official poster with the instruction to "concentrate fire on the demagogues and office-seekers". It ordered the inquiry into the cases of the "black Party Committee" and all the convicts to be suspended so as to switch the struggle against the "political speculators". The announcement was written in an elegant hand on a vast red and gilt-framed sheet. The "commission" had obviously meant to lay solemn emphasis on the turnabout in the "cultural revolution" movement, but its effort fell flat. An indignant "Leftist" hand had scrawled a Mao quotation slantwise clear across the solemn announcement, saying: "Revolution is no crime, rebellion is justified!"

These words had been uttered long ago, back in the days of Kuomintang rule, when they had expressed the Chinese people's right to revolt against the dark and sinister semi-colonial regime. But whom was it aimed against in a people's republic, in 1966, 17 years after Liberation? It was, of course, in the first place aimed against the "working commission".

Hard as I tried, I could not get used to the everyday goings-on under the "cultural revolution". Now that I no longer had any consultations with my professor, I studied by myself, now and again going out into the city for a change. Life outside the University gates still ran its usual round, and the people were still as friendly, modest and industrious as they had ever been. The city bookshops were quiet and cool even in summer, the

waiters at the cafés and restaurants were always polite and willing, and the street peddlers, whatever their wares—ice-cream, biscuits, fruits or vegetables—would still give you a smile. By contrast, the University looked like a lunatic asylum, and I lived in it protected by my foreign citizenship as by a house of glass.

I was returning home late one night, after a birthday party for one of our trainees at the Institute of Languages. The buses were no longer running and I had no money for a taxi. Besides, it is not easy to catch a taxi in Peking, you have to order one from the taxi-rank. The simplest way was to walk along a beeline asphalt road running from West to East, which usually got me home in about an hour.

In the quiet of the sleeping city I walked past peaceful-looking cabbage plots, square patches of wheat and tall maize, and even bright-green stunted rice paddies. Large brick institute buildings, factories and an elevator made a clear silhouette against the sky, towering above the rows of grey old huts, covered with tile and sunken low into the ground. I also walked past the ancient city wall, which in its more than 600 years had sprouted a crest of pine-trees. The road ran on past some grey four-storeyed buildings behind fences of barbed wire—settlements belonging to various secret plants and ministries, and finally took me to the ancient, two-metre-high wall skirting my own University from the south.

When I came up to the gates it was already after one. The gates were locked and the guards asleep. Fatigued, I thought, was helping the "working commission" to put the place in order. Six or seven benighted students, boys and girls, were knocking timidly on the gates and calling out to the guards.

"Late?" I asked.

"Everyone's asleep, there's no one to open the gates," replied a friendly young man of about 25 who stood close to a girl in glasses.

I suggested that we should climb over the gates and, since no one objected, led the way. They all followed, and the girl even asked me to help her over. The three of us walked on together.

They told me that they had once studied at the Russian Language Department, but had now been switched to English, of which they had as yet learned no more than a few words. Our parting was a friendly one, but they did not risk giving me their names or striking up a closer friendship.

Where the lane forked, I turned off to the left and, stepping over a deep ditch, was just about to take a shortcut past the

boiler-room to my own hostel, when someone hailed me from behind:

"Comrade! Wait a minute!"

I saw a short middle-aged man hurrying along towards me. As he came nearer, he looked at me through his spectacles and said:

"Could you spare me a minute?"

"Yes, why not, although it is pretty late."

"I know, but in the day-time, you see, it's quite impossible to talk with you, especially for me: we are having a cultural revolution. But I should like to have a talk with you and have your advice."

"But why me?"

"You are the only Soviet man at our University, and I'm sure you won't inform on me, will you? But you mustn't think I share your views or support the modern revisionists' line. Still, I don't like the viciousness and ingratitude of our attacks on the Soviet Union, nor do I like the way they are afraid of you here and forbid us to talk to you. I myself should like to have an argument with you!"

"I'm afraid I haven't the least desire to argue with you," I said.

"That's up to you," he amiably agreed, and then asked me with some mistrust:

"Are you still going on with your studies?"

"I am."

"But what about the cultural revolution?"

"It's made my studies more difficult."

"No one at the University has been doing any work or study; you're the only one."

After a pause, he went on:

"I'd like to ask your advice. You know, it has often happened here in China that people are first given a chance to speak out and show their mettle, and are then destroyed. That's what happened to the Right-wing elements in 1957. First they were allowed to have their say, to come out at meetings and in the press, and were then all of them either sent down to the countryside or disgraced for life. Do you know that?"

"I do. All my Chinese friends, whom I had met at the Moscow youth festival, disappeared after 1957."

"So you do know, then," he gave a satisfied nod. "But then it was the Rightists. Couldn't the same thing now happen to the 'Leftists'?"

"What do you mean?" I asked with surprise.

"I'm a 'Leftist' element, you see," he modestly confessed.

The man had not seemed to me to be particularly interesting, but now I looked at him with a quickening curiosity.

"So you're a 'Leftist'? One of those who want to destroy people?"

"I don't accept all the views of the 'Leftists'," he hastened to reply. "But I have often repeated what they say and have always kept close to them. I thought it was safest that way. You can never understand what our life is. Everyone of us has to face constant danger. We've had a fresh movement every single year, and it's the easiest thing to fall victim to one of these. I have joined the 'Leftists' to survive myself. I know you believe in humanism, but over here we have no humanism. It's a bourgeois vestige, whereas we have only class struggle and class feelings. There is no mercy. I thought that if I kept repeating the toughest and most violent slogans, I would be spared."

"But they haven't spared you, have they?"

"No, didn't you know? The 'working commission' has started ferreting out us 'Leftists', hoisting us onto the very platform at the stadium where a month ago we had dealt with the black Party Committee."

"You don't say so!"

"You don't know that, of course. The 'working commission' wanted to ferret out Tan Li-fu himself—he's the best-known of us all and has delivered the greatest number of speeches. Well, thirty other 'Leftists' came out on the platform with him and stood close together, repeating that we were one, body and soul. And when they tried to drag out another student, he resisted and scratched out a commission member's eye."

I said nothing.

"You don't believe me," he said, and I felt that he was hurt. "But I'm telling you the truth. The 'working commission' wants to destroy us. The cultural revolution may be another trap for the gullible, like the 'hundred flowers' movement, which ended in a clamp-down on the Rightist elements. Do you know? What do you, a Soviet man, think of the cultural revolution?"

"I think that the movement you have termed a cultural revolution has nothing to do either with culture or with revolution."

"I've never thought of that," he said. "The cultural revolution is a political struggle; it is cultural because it started at the

universities, while revolution is a word we have used to describe anything we choose. Any struggle here is called revolution. We say that revolution is uninterrupted. That's why I wanted to have your advice: what am I to do? Do you know, by any chance, what is going to happen to the 'Leftists'? What are the foreigners saying? What do you Soviets think about it?"

"You say it was fear that made you turn 'Leftist'?" I countered with a question.

"That's not an easy question to answer," he said. He was not offended in the least. "I want to lead a quiet life, doing my favourite job—I'm a teacher, you know. I have a family and a flat, and I teach at the Foreign Languages Department. But we have a new movement every year, and one's at one's wits' end about what to do to be left alone."

"A grim life, indeed," I said. "But why kill and torture people?"

"What can one do? Class struggle is what they call it over here. We don't ordinarily kill anyone, but it does happen now and again."

He thought awhile and went on:

"For seventeen years now China has been ruled in the name of Mao Tse-tung. But what of it? We overthrew the old Party Committee, which we call black these days, in Mao's name. But how had that Committee ruled over us in its own day? Also in Mao's name! The Committee men, you know, all came to the fore at the University back in 1962, during the campaign against the Right-wing opportunists, their term for any friends of the Soviet Union. At that time they swore by Mao Tse-tung's name, and everyone believed them. They are still shouting about their loyalty to Chairman Mao, but no one believes them any longer. We have told them bluntly that they are lying scoundrels, villains and traitors. But whom have they betrayed? None other than Chairman Mao! And what does Chairman Mao think about this himself? I wish we knew! We 'Leftists' are now being persecuted for initiating and taking an active part in the cultural revolution. They say we are demagogues and office-seekers. But don't we believe in Chairman Mao? We certainly do! And what's so bad about a young man wishing to distinguish himself? After all, he makes revolution, and I think it's only fair that he should be promoted. One is, of course, free not to take part in anything at all, but then one could be seized and asked why one isn't. But once one starts taking part, one could be asked why one is. What is one then

to answer? Why, everyone here supports Chairman Mao. All those who didn't have disappeared long since!"

"In other words, your uninterrupted revolution is meant to justify ceaseless repressions," I said.

"That can't be helped," he shrugged. "Many people have indeed perished in the course of the revolution. It was Confucius who said that in China words did not correspond to notions and urged, as he put it, a correction of names. Our uninterrupted revolution, whose present stage is called cultural, might perhaps initiate such a correction of the names."

"But the idea of permanent revolution is an old idea. It was Trotsky who first suggested it. Its practical implementation, however, is indeed none but your own."

"So you disapprove of what's going on in China? And of my behaviour, too, don't you? But what would you yourself have done in my place?" he said with a pathetic look that at once betrayed guilt and fear.

"I couldn't say," I replied. "But if a man has any political convictions, he should stick to them to the last. It's utterly inconceivable that one should change one's views every year!"

"That's the only way we can keep going," he said in a flat voice, and fell silent. Presently he went on, looking away from me:

"It's four years since the famine. Four years ago we had to eat grass, leaves and bark. That was the time of the 'great leap forward' and the 'people's communes'. And on top of that came all those natural disasters. Every family in China was bereaved. The memory of the famine was just beginning to fade and things were getting back to normal when the cultural revolution broke out. Another misfortune was upon us."

"If China didn't have these 'movements' that are being mounted every year and that divert people from their work, and if there were more regard for those who work in earnest, China would be a much better place to live in," I said. I could not help saying that, but at once regretted having said it.

"It can't be helped, can it? After all, we put politics first. The main thing for us now is to weather the storm of the cultural revolution. When we were overthrowing the black Party Committee, no one interfered or objected, which means that the men up on top were backing us. But now they have sent over a 'working group' to fight us. I simply can't think what is to be said or done!"

"There have been rumours," he continued, "that it was Chairman Mao himself who planned the cultural revolution.

That's why I've been so active. Why then are they hounding us? Life in China is a grim business, indeed. You won't catch anyone laughing in China these days: we can't afford to laugh or go in for entertainments. Some are too scared, while others, those who are busy making the cultural revolution, have no time for sleep, let alone entertainment. That's why no one laughs in China these days! But how about me, what am I to do? Before the cultural revolution broke out I was sure that in a couple of years our relations with the Soviet Union would be re-established, even if not at the old level. But now I've realised that that's unlikely. You can't understand a word of what's being said in the papers." He moved closer to me, although there was no one about, and dropped his voice to a whisper. "The boys were at a loss, and phoned up *Jenmin jihpao* to ask why the cultural revolution was being wound up. After all, Mao Tse-tung thought has yet to win out. But none of their inquiries got a coherent explanation. We have now sent a delegation to the Party CC, or rather, to the special "Group for the Affairs of the Cultural Revolution" under the CC. It's a pity Chairman Mao is not in Peking—he is living near Shanghai. But they say that he has sent over Kang Sheng and everything will soon be cleared up. But in the meantime we shall go on fighting."

"Do you mean to say you have many opponents?"

"Most of the students are unsound. They used to truckle to the old Party Committee and have a guilty conscience. That's why they are glad to support the 'working commission'. What's more, many of the revolutionaries who stormed the Party Committee on June 3 have gone over to the 'commission' and have become its activists. Things change so rapidly! You can't rely on anyone..."

The confession of the "revolutionary Leftist", considering the small hours of the night, was getting too tiring and monotonous for me, and I made no secret of my feelings. He got the message and rounded off our conversation by saying:

"If you ever meet me again, please, try not to show that we know each other. That's why I'm not giving you my name. I wish you success in your studies. Good-bye!"

We bowed to each other and went our respective ways. The early summer dawn was already shedding a faint light on the buildings around me. Finding the hostel doors locked, I knocked at the doorkeeper's window. He rose heavily and let me in without a word. I went up quietly to my room. Ma's bed had not been slept in again.

I spent the whole of the next day in the bookrows of the city arcade. The heat there was not as bad as it was in the neighbouring shops, to say nothing of the streets, but even there it was stifling, and the assistants kept splashing water on the uneven asphalt floor. Now and then I bought myself an ice-cream or a bowl of cold milk.

By six o'clock, with the noon-day heat almost over, I ventured into the street with a bag bulging with books. It was the peak hour for office leavers, and the streets were teeming with cyclists, the pavements with pedestrians, and the busses and trolley-busses were packed full. I made my way along the crowded Wangfuching, Peking's chief commercial thoroughfare, keeping to the shady side, for the temperature was still over 30°C. To make things worse, I just missed my trolley and had to wait for another. A trolley going the other way was just rounding the corner. It was packed with young pioneers, who leaned out of the windows, waving little red flags and chanting:

"Chairman Mao has arrived! Chairman Mao is back in the capital! Chairman Mao has come back! Chairman Mao has attended a session at the Palace of the National People's Congress! Chairman Mao is in good health! He is very well! Long live Chairman Mao! Glory, glory, glory! Long live Chairman Mao!"

The children scattered leaflets written in a firm young hand, saying the things that they had been told to repeat aloud.

The people in the queue at the trolley stop broke into a lively discussion.

"That's very good news!"

"Now the revolution will start in earnest!"

Their expressions of joy were cautious and subdued.

Ma was at home.

"What's been keeping you so busy these last few days? You've even stopped coming home to sleep. Still, I know something you don't know, something of the highest importance," I chaffed.

"What do you mean?"

I pulled an indifferent face and went on as if I had not heard him:

"Have you any idea of Mao's present whereabouts?"

He stared.

"I have. He's back in Peking and has been to the NPC Palace today to attend a conference on the 'cultural revolution'."

"How do you know that?" Ma was astonished at the news and seethed with anger at my knowledge.

"I heard it in town."

"Who told you? Where did you hear of it?" he insisted. He was determined to get at the truth; he made a long face and clenched his teeth, so that I thought it best to forego the joke and tell him about the pioneers.

He relaxed at once and slumped down on the bed, but I saw something was worrying him.

"That's very important news," he said.

"That's why I've told you."

"Chairman Mao is in Peking! He will now head the cultural revolution movement in person, there are bound to be changes," he rose. "I'll go and tell the others. It's very important news!"

When I went out that night, some changes were already in evidence. The commission's residence, still decorated in red, was now ringed with guards. Liu Shao-chi's portrait had gone, and two twin Mao portraits were now standing side by side. The "Leftists" were doing their protesting quite openly, at the very entrance to the residence, pouring verbal dirt on the "working commission". The speaker with clenched fists was spouting curses and the others echoed him in rising tones. The trees, stands and slogans round the entrance were smeared with swear words. A trim and grave-looking young teacher was pasting a collective tatzupao on the wall of the residence, which said: "Let us protect the working commission from slander!" Three "Leftists" tried to drag him away from the wall, but the activists on duty stepped in to prevent them.

"Death to the parasites! Down with the Right-wing opportunists!" another Leftist orator yelled.

On my way back in about an hour's time, I noticed a commotion at the entrance. The crowd of "Leftists" was trying to storm the building, while the activists were holding them back in the doorway. The twin Mao portraits and the slogan stands had been tipped over, and the fighting students were trampling all over them.

More activists with red armbands and other "commission" supporters were rushing to the rescue. In closely serried ranks they pushed the raving "Leftists" into the back yard, finally expelling them from the porch. A group of commission members rushed out into the yard to help clear the battle ground. Chairman Chang stood on the porch issuing orders. The "Leftists" retreated, calling back threats.

Nguyen Thi-Canh, a Vietnamese fellow-student, came up to me with a smile and asked whether I had heard of Mao's arrival. I told him what I had heard in the city.

"They have now come out against the 'working commission' and think that Chairman Mao will back them up," he said.

"But wasn't it Chairman Mao who had sent the commission over in the first place?"

"Of course not! It was Liu Shao-chi. He had been in charge of the cultural revolution in Chairman Mao's absence, and it was he who had sent the 'working groups' to the localities to take over and run the cultural revolution. Chairman Mao seems to have nothing to do with them."

I had already got used to seeing the portraits of the two chairmen always together—in the papers, on the walls, and even on the door of the room next to my own, where before the "cultural revolution" various shady characters had sat eaves-dropping in 24-hour shifts.

"Things in China change so fast!" I remarked.

Shortly after that the "Leftists" stopped their attacks on the "working commission". They decided to be orderly and sent a request to the CC "Group for the Affairs of the Cultural Revolution" for some speakers at the University. The "Leftists" broke up into detachments and marched along the lanes to the roll of drums, with cries of "Long live the new victory of the cultural revolution! Welcome to the 'Group for the Affairs of the Cultural Revolution' under the CC!"

The guests of honour were being eagerly expected from day to day. The "working commission" had also put up ceremonial placards welcoming their arrival.

The meeting was to be held near the library. The rostrum was decked out in flowers and greenery. Yet another giant Mao portrait had been put up, with skilful floodlighting at night.

At last they arrived. A long row of cars stopped at the office building. Commission Chief Chang delivered a welcoming speech from the steps of the porch. The crowd here was fairly large, but all the "Leftists" were waiting near the library. The welcoming speech ended in a polite exchange of applause. Then the guests made their way towards the main rally, followed by Chang and his supporters. The "Leftists" behaved decently, even giving Chang a seat on the rostrum.

The Chinese leaders were relaxed: on the way to the library, they joked, spoke to the boys and girls around them, and readily shook hands with everyone.

"That's what I call real men!" enthusiastic voices in the crowd were saying.

"Let's get acquainted," said a spare old man in glasses, giving the gathering a smile. "We know you, comrades. You are the revolutionary students and teachers of the Peking Pedagogical University. We know you very well, comrades, but you don't know us."

There was a stirring in the crowd as it moved in closer round the rostrum, although the radio relay system was working very well. The young people clapped all together and smiled to show that they appreciated the joke.

"This is the 'Group for the Affairs of the Cultural Revolution' under the Party CC!" the old man went on. "This 'Group' has been set up on Chairman Mao's personal instructions! This is its Chairman, Comrade Chen Po-ta, and that is Comrade Chiang Ching, the deputy-chairman and wife of our dearly beloved leader, Chairman Mao Tse-tung! Here, too, are some other comrades. This, for instance, is Comrade Li Hsiieh-feng, First Secretary of the new Peking City Committee. And this is, of course, Comrade Chang, chief of your 'working commission', whom you must know better than I do."

This unusual, informal opening of a rally attended by several high-ranking leaders thrilled the audience, giving them a sense of being involved in some highly important affair of state. They were now quite at ease, giving a clap after every introduction (those introduced making perfectly theatrical bows), and received Mao's wife with joyful animation.

When the old man introduced all the guests, Chiang Ching stepped forward and said:

"Comrade Kang Sheng has introduced all of us, but with his usual modesty has forgotten about himself. Let me introduce him: Comrade Kang Sheng."

The old man bowed, his glasses gleaming. A murmur ran through the crowd. When everything was quiet again, Chiang Ching continued:

"Comrade Kang Sheng is not a member of the 'Group for the Affairs of the Cultural Revolution' under the Party CC, but he is our chief adviser. Neither Comrade Chen, nor I ever take any steps or make any decisions without consulting him. Comrade Kang Sheng's experience of the class struggle is truly precious!"

Unfortunately, the young were ignorant of the history of their revolution. Back at the Seventh Congress of the CPC, the "good old man", Kang Sheng, had been publicly described as

"the Party executioner" for carrying out nationalistic "purges," and had the blood of thousands of Chinese Communists on his hands. Kang Sheng's real experience lay in organising massive repressions.

After that Chen Po-ta, who chaired the meeting, called upon some student speakers. There were three: a boy and two girls. The boy made a colourless speech, but the girls spoke with great élan. Cursing the "black Party Committee", and "modern revisionism" into the bargain, they yelled at the top of their voices, doing real violence to their vocal chords. Here, Chiang Ching would exclaim "Very good!" and, rising from her chair, would hand them a glass of water. This gesture always had a staggering effect on the audience: it would buzz with admiration at Chiang Ching's charm and unassuming manners.

She was dressed in a green close-fitting army uniform. But despite her massive spectacles and service cap, which gave her a solemn and impressive look, she appeared youthful and you could never say that she was in her fifties. She was entirely at ease: she kept moving about and dropping various remarks, plied the speakers with questions, played up to the audience, and showed her "revolutionary zeal" in every possible way, evoking many bursts of applause. I watched her with interest.

After speeches by Chen Po-ta, Kang Sheng and Li Hsüeh-feng (which I do not remember at all, for they skilfully avoided saying anything of interest), came Chiang Ching's turn and she roused and inflamed the audience.

She started with eulogies to the young, with unabashed adulation, which the "Leftists" met with a storm of applause. Here is the gist of what she said:

"The older generation, all the adults, are infected with shortcomings and survivals of the past. This applies even to those who took part in the revolution and the liberation struggle. At that time they were good, but now, 17 years later, they wallow in luxury and have degenerated. They have gone flabby and fear the class struggle. But, worst of all, the old and the middle-aged do not know anything of Mao Tse-tung thought and are unable to appreciate it, although it was that which had liberated China. But you young people, you who have grown up in the Mao Tse-tung epoch, you are free of any shortcomings. Your minds are pure, you are not infected with any bourgeois habits, you cannot catch revisionism. You are head and shoulders above the older generation, because you alone can master Mao Tse-tung's thought and carry it out in real earnest."

Her speech was repeatedly interrupted with ovations. She then indulged in self-abasement.

"You are the revolutionary young, you know Mao Tse-tung thought better than anyone else. You are the rising revolutionary generation. We cannot guide you, but we shall always support you. You must venture, storm, attack, crush, destroy, organise, and revolt! The group under the CC will back any initiative you may have. We cannot guide you, but we can always support you!"

The "Leftists" went wild with clapping, cheering Mao Tse-tung and the "Group for the Affairs of the Cultural Revolution".

"You are the rising revolutionary generation," she continued. "You will carry forward our revolution. We, people of the older generation, are leaving the scene and passing on to you our revolutionary traditions. Chairman Mao is leaving you to govern China. The school of the cultural revolution is a great school! You are to be masters of the state!"

The students raised a deafening roar: they were ready to take over on the spot and were simply burning with desire to do so.

"We are now saying that all power is to be handed over to the 'Group for the Affairs of the Cultural Revolution'!" Chiang Ching declared. "Set up your own cultural-revolution committees and take over!"

Her final words were drowned out by the shouting.

The whole thing was utterly absurd: here was a person openly claiming all power, seeking to take it away from the lawful agencies, and all this met with enthusiastic approval.

By lavishing gross flattery on the young, speculating on their lack of experience and thirst for action, and urging them to be active and show initiative, the organisers of the new all-China venture deluded the young about their role and status, and gave them a false sense of self-importance. No wonder they fell for the line.

The effect was immediate. Once the leaders were gone, there was no end of meetings, with one orator following another in quick succession, for everyone wanted to outdo the others in a display of enthusiasm and frenzy. The voices carried by the loudspeakers and echoing along the lanes lined with fading mimosa-trees had been reduced to incoherent guttural sounds.

The "Leftists" staged vociferous incitement demonstrations backed up with the roll of drumbeat. A giant announcement

was put up at the intersections, urging everyone to take part in the election of a University committee for the cultural revolution: "Revolutionary students and teachers, rally round the revolutionary roll of the Left!" Someone had added this categorical postscript to the announcement: "If the Right opportunists from the 'working commission' dare to come up with their own roll, we shall bash in the dogs' heads of Chairman Mao's listed enemies!"

I stood at the window in my corridor and looked out upon the entrance to the "working commission's" residence, which was still in festive garb. Except for an occasional distant drumbeat, the place was quiet and deserted, with only a few listless students with red armbands hanging about, pacing the walls covered with old, ragged tatzupaos.

The drumbeat steadily grew louder, and then what appeared to be an endless column of students, carrying two-metre-high Mao portraits, came into view at the farther end of the lane leading to the "working commission's" residence. At the entrance, the column came to a halt and the drumbeat ceased. The guards on duty round the residence had already cordoned off the entrance. The crowd seethed, breaking ranks, but a few words of command from the organisers stilled the buzz of thousands of voices. The din of the drums and gongs broke out anew, and the whole multitude broke into a prayer-like song that one heard almost daily:

"On the high seas, put your trust in the helmsman;
Mao Tse-tung is like the sun;
The revolution relies on Mao Tse-tung thought."

By the time the song was done, the guards had been pressed back into the building. In the brief silence that followed, a boy leapt onto the porch and, throwing back his head towards the upper windows, gave a piercing yell:

"Come out!"

There was no answer. The boy motioned with his arm, and some five or six organisers ran up the porch. The guards obediently stepped aside to let them pass and they disappeared inside the building. The crowd watched and waited.

In two or three minutes, the guards stepped aside once again to let out Chang, the chief of the "working commission". He came along of his own accord, with two young men holding him by the arms in a token gesture. Other members of the "working commission" followed behind. Chang wanted to

take a step forward but his escort checked him by stretching out a hand in front of him.

"Bow down your head!" he shrieked in a high falsetto.

For a moment Chang stood quite still and then all at once his shoulders sagged heavily and he dropped his head.

The crowd raised an ecstatic howl, cheering Chairman Mao and bawling out slogans:

"Long live the new victory of the cultural revolution!"

"Let us carry through the cultural revolution to the very end!"

Those who stood closest to Chang poked their fists under his nose. A tag saying "Right-wing opportunist element" dangled from his neck. Voices around him yelled:

"Your black kingdom has come to an end!"

An hour-long "disgrace rally" ended in a "disgrace procession". As Chang, with bowed head, walked along the human corridor, they spat under his feet. All the other "commission" members, also with bowed heads, followed him two by two. The crowd whooped and bellowed. At the stadium the men were lined up in two rows on the platform.

"This beats me!" I heard a voice behind me. "Didn't they say that the 'working commission' had been sent over by the CC? Do you remember how they welcomed it a month ago?" It was the Vietnamese, Bac Ninh, who was also looking out of the window. "But now they've put them on trial like the old Party Committee!"

But he was wrong: it was only Chang who was tried in that way, while the rest—all ex-military men—were allowed to make a statement.

Bac and I went down to the stadium. As we came up, a commission member was just starting to speak.

"We thank you, revolutionary students and teachers of the Pedagogical University," he said in a hollow voice. "We thank you for liberating us! You have liberated us from the yoke of the black kingdom, you have overthrown Right-wing opportunism! We shall now be able to learn from you and to take part in the cultural revolution ourselves! Thank you!"

As the ex-military were allowed to come down from the disgrace platform and raise their heads, the whole stadium once again broke into the "put your trust in the helmsman" song.

Chang was now alone on the platform, face to face with the whooping mob.

VII. TRIP ACROSS CHINA

THE SIAN CITY COMMITTEE HOLDS OUT, A WORKERS' HOSTEL, THE SONG OF
OUYANG HAI, YENAN—MAO'S CHIEF WARTIME BASE, A PEASANT
DESCRIBES HIS MEETING WITH MAO, A CHINESE VILLAGE

During its month in power, the "working commission" had managed to take a decision on my trip across China, which I naturally regarded as being most important. In the old days, foreign students would be taken on trips of this kind as a matter of course, but during the "cultural revolution" one had to obtain special permission. I was offered a choice of several routes, and decided to go to the North-West, to Shensi Province (the cities of Sian and Yen-an) and Honan Province (the cities of Loyang and Chengchow).

We left very abruptly. Most of the group were Vietnamese, who were very friendly, but my futao Ma, who naturally went along with me, always hung about, trying hard to prevent me from talking with them. As for the other foreign students—among them some Indonesians and Japanese—I was free to talk to them as much as I liked. However, one Japanese refused even to sit or stand next to me, to say nothing of talking, but the other two, especially Takarashi, were quite friendly. Takarashi took a great interest in the Chinese economy. At a village in the Linhsian District he asked a brigade-leader about the increase in crop yields over the few preceding years and how they had achieved it.

"Sixty percent!" the man replied. "And, need I say, on the basis of Mao Tse-tung thought."

Takarashi's usual polite smile suddenly gave way to a sardonic grin.

"But, for all that, you did start putting in mineral fertilisers, didn't you?" he pursued.

"Yes, of course," said the brigade-leader, apparently deciding not to tell any lies. "But Mao Tse-tung thought is the most important thing of all!" He launched into one of the usual propaganda orations.

As he spoke, Takarashi snorted.

At Sian, our multinational group was put up at the best hotel, which once used to be reserved for rich foreigners, of whom we now no longer saw any sign.

A young man, who introduced himself as Wang, Party functionary at Sian University, met us in the lobby. He was soon joined by several functionaries of the provincial and city Party Committees. As we were being shown to our rooms, they carried on a lively conversation with our escorts. They looked up to my futao Ma as to a high-ranking personage, a man from the capital, and addressed him with special deference, as they would an older and worthier man, although Ma was the younger.

"You've come from Peking itself? From Chairman Mao's own residence?" Wang asked politely, knowing full well that we had.

"Yes," Ma replied with due dignity. "There's great enthusiasm in Peking: they are carrying on a cultural revolution, no time left even for sleep."

"We are also having a cultural revolution," said Wang, airing himself with a fan. "When you are free, come over to our place for a leisurely talk over dinner."

Ma thanked him with the condescension of a man from the capital. Naturally, I longed to hear what they would say, but realising that this was impossible, decided to start up a conversation myself. I asked them bluntly:

"What about your city? Have you, too, got a black committee? It hasn't been toppled yet, has it?"

They looked baffled, and Ma hurriedly explained:

"It's common knowledge in Peking that the old City Committee was a black one and has been toppled. That's no secret. At our own University, the revolutionary comrades have already done away with the black band from the Party Committee and the University board."

"You don't say!" Wang was flabbergasted and just stood there fanning himself feverishly.

"Then we had a 'working group', but that suffered from Right-wing opportunism," continued Ma, warming to his theme.

At this point, the City Committee man stopped him:

"Let's talk of that later." He turned to me and said: "Here in Sian we do not and cannot have any black outfits. But we are also carrying on the great proletarian cultural revolution. The revolutionary masses have been demonstrating along the central streets in support of the great cultural revolution, and our Party organisation has been guiding them."

So, I thought, the Sian organisations were trying to hold their ground. But whether they would succeed was another question. Nevertheless, events at Sian still ran along different lines from those in Peking: order and discipline were still being maintained and there was as yet no sign of any violence. The demonstrations we saw in the streets looked like ordinary holiday processions. The Party bodies still had a firm foothold.

We were taken on a tour of the city and shown the ruins of China's ancient capital, pagodas dating back to the days of the Tang dynasty, a fine historical museum, and a museum of stelae, stone slabs or pillars with ancient inscriptions, known popularly as the "stone forest". There was much to be seen at Sian. We were taken to an enamel-dish factory which turned out bowls and dishes of a singularly deep-red colour, and also to a dye-works, where we foreigners were even invited to see a workers' hostel. This was my only chance to have a talk with the workers, though naturally in the presence of Ma and members of the local management, who made up quite a large escort.

Like all new enterprises in China, the dye-works was building nearby a settlement for contract workers recruited from all over the country. The settlement had a hostel for married and single workers, a shop, a croché and nursery schools, a school, a club and a dining-room.

The workers' hostel was a solid four-storeyed brick building, and we were taken up to the first floor to see the girls' section.

By Chinese standards, the girls were very well off, much better than the students at Peking Pedagogical University. In a room with about 16 square metres of space there were four beds, with a clothes-box at the side of each bed, and a small table with a mirror near the door. The room was very clean: spotless white bed-spreads and carefully embroidered pillow-slips. The girls were proud of their hostel and were happy to be living there. The building had running water, drainage, and even central heating, the radiator in the room making two coils

under a window covered with a metal mosquito net. But there was not much space left in the centre of the room.

"Do you find it comfortable here?" I asked, when all of us—hosts, guests, and escort—had seated ourselves on the clean and soft beds, there being only one chair by thy table.

"We do," one of the girls replied politely. "The management sees to it that those living in one room work in different shifts. Of the four of us in this room, only two are usually at home, while the other two are at work. Besides, there is a special study room on each floor, where you can go to read a paper, listen to the radio, or do some ironing or darning. We use our small table only to comb our hair."

"The girl comrades want to look pretty," Ma said with a smile.

Apart from our escort, officials of three different levels—Ma from Peking, a man from Sian, and a local factory man—there were also two Japanese, an American and a Thai, but the girls were mainly interested in Ma, the man from the capital, and myself, from the USSR. All their questions were addressed to me. The first question they asked was whether any of the Soviet young today were capable of heroic deeds. Peking propaganda kept saying that the Soviet young had "degenerated", but I caught a hint of doubt in the girls' question. It was by no means a provocative attack: they simply wanted to get at the truth and were prepared to hear out the other side with interest.

As I replied, Ma interrupted me several times, but as soon as he would stop talking, general attention would again be focussed on me and I would go on with a smile, just to show that I was used to being heckled in this way. At last I could stand it no longer and asked him not to interrupt, for I found it hard to speak Chinese.

Ma did not want to appear rude in public: by that time the room was full of working girls, who had come over from the other rooms on the floor, while more were looking in at the door. So he consulted in a whisper with his fellow-officials, and the factory man said:

"Our time is running out. Perhaps our guests have some questions to ask?"

"In that case, I have," I put in quickly, before anyone cut short our talk. "Will you, please, tell us what you do by way of recreation, what books you read and how you spend your spare time?"

The girls were quite willing to reply and told us one by one that once a week they had a film on at the factory club and that on Saturdays they attended various hobby groups. One girl was a member of the amateur folk-dance group. Every other day, either after working hours or during the breaks, local Party functionaries held political briefings, reading out and explaining *Jenmin jihpao* editorials. One girl said she embroidered, and everyone knitted.

"Do you read any magazines, novels, or any other fiction?"

Their unanimous reply was no, they did not.

The Sian officials were flustered; they did not want to lose face. The City Committee man asked the girls to tell us more about their studies.

They told us that up until the spring of 1966 many girls had attended evening classes providing general education or vocational refresher courses. But now all these classes had been wound up, and the girls had been switched to the study of Mao's "thought" and writings. Mao books were the only ones they could now obtain.

"Oh yes, I've quite forgotten!" one of the girls suddenly exclaimed. "At our political briefings we also read the novel, *The Song of Ouyang Hai*!"

"Did you read it right through to the end?" I asked.

"No, we hadn't had time to finish it. We read nothing now but works by Chairman Mao."

By 1966, the Chinese workers had already been denied all access to literature. The Maoists had imposed a deliberate cultural quarantine on the people, starving them of the most elementary spiritual nourishment. The Chinese people, who had always striven for knowledge, education and the arts, were being turned into spiritual cripples in an effort to quench their natural curiosity and thirst for knowledge.

After the talk with the girls, I made a study of *The Song of Ouyang Hai*, a novel that was still available for reading in China. My impression of it was most unfavourable.

That bulky volume was the latest Chinese novel. It was first published in December 1965, and came out in a second edition in 1966. Six years later, in 1972, it was still the "latest" Chinese novel, for Chinese printing-works had not published a single volume of fiction throughout the whole of the "cultural revolution", confining themselves to Mao Tse-tung's writings.

The novel has a story of its own, which is interesting because it reflects the twists and turns of the sharp political struggle in

the course of the "cultural revolution". Its literary merits, however, are extremely modest, to say the least. When the novel was out, the Chinese papers carried front-page reports saying that Chen Yi, China's Foreign Minister and Premier Chou En-lai's Deputy, and Tao Chu, Secretary of the CPC Central Committee's South-Central Bureau, who had for many years stood at the head of the country's southern provinces, had met the then unknown author, Chin Ching-mai, and had spoken highly of his novel.

Since the two leaders were vested with considerable authority, their statements amounted to something like an official political line. Both of them had said that Chin Ching-mai's book was "epoch-making" and "another major landmark in the history of Chinese creative fiction".

Chen Yi said: "*The Song of Ouyang Hai* is a wonderfully gripping novel, an excellent book about the socialist epoch. We have already had many films and plays set in our own epoch, but this is the first major and well-written novel whose heroes belong to the socialist epoch. It is a product of Party guidance, the masses' warmest support, and the author's own effort. The novel brings out the heroic image of a man who has been fostered by Mao Tse-tung thought, a man of high class-consciousness, who is utterly free of any individualism and is fair, fearless, and courageous. The author has described the specific features of a hero of our epoch."

I will presently deal with the sort of hero he really was and the manner in which he had been pieced together on the basis of Mao "thought". Let me just point out here that Chen Yi ranked the author last in the production of his novel.

Tao Chu, for his part, said: "Upon its publication, *The Song of Ouyang Hai* met with much enthusiasm among the readers and great attention on the part of various mass organisations, which means that it is a very good, epoch-making book, and that socialist literature itself has boundless prospects before it."

In other words, Tao Chu said that the Maoist leadership's favourable notice vouched for the novel's "epoch-making significance".

Tao Chu rounded off his statement with the usual panegyric: "*The Song of Ouyang Hai* has emerged in the creative way of socialist literature as a result of the fact that the People's Liberation Army, guided by the Party CC and Comrade Mao Tse-tung, and under the direct steering of Comrade Lin Biao, has made a persistent study of Chairman Mao's writings and has made politics paramount. Once we arm ourselves with Mao

Tse-tung thought in real earnest and plunge deep into practical struggle, we shall be able to write good books even without being writers."

This amounted to saying that writers were superfluous and that anyone could write a "good" book, the kind of book that was wanted.

As soon as the interview was published, the Chinese press broke out in a rash of extracts from the novel, often continued in the following issues, fawning and adulatory articles by critics, and haughty statements by the author himself, who shared his unique experience. The press kept saying that his was an "epoch-making" novel and building him up into an outstanding figure.

The scientist and writer Kuo Mo-jo spoke about the novel in very high terms. In April 1966 he said: "This is an epoch-making novel.... The author has indeed presented a vivid image of Ouyang Hai, and has vividly reflected Chairman Mao's thought. Comrade Ouyang Hai died in 1963, and the author has fitted in almost all the pre-1963 lines and political guidelines and almost all of the Chairman's thoughts."

That was, indeed, most remarkable scope for a piece of fiction.

In the early stages of the "cultural revolution" Chin Ching-mai was left alone and continued ringing the praises of Chairman Mao, his "thought" and his policy, hurling stones of criticism at those who got into trouble and informing on them. Tao Chu, the lucky author's patron, saddled the "epoch-making" novel in the manner of a white steed and rode into Peking to become head of the CPC Central Committee's Propaganda Department in place of the toppled leaders.

Throughout the summer of 1966, the novel was reprinted again and again. It was hailed as a model and was being read at the compulsory political briefings alongside the newspaper editorials. Tao Chu did not hesitate to exercise his authority in promoting his literary brain-child.

The novel is about a Maoist, the new hero. Chinese propaganda had edged up to this type of hero gradually, over a period of years. Back in 1959 Mao had first rejected the very concept of socialist realism, saying that Chinese literature should have its own, "more advanced" creative method, that of "blending revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism". Mao's own poems were at once proclaimed to be a model of literary perfection in the spirit of the new require-

ments, with hundreds of gushing critical articles raising him to the highest crest of literary fame.

But the first "masterpiece", Mao's poems, was also the last: Chinese literature was sliding into a decline. Chinese propaganda then decided that what was needed was a "blend with life", which meant that all the arts were to glorify "real-life" heroes. All these heroes were soldiers—dead soldiers at that. It was safer, of course, to glorify the dead: anything could be said on their behalf, since they were unlikely to speak up.

Ouyang Hai was indeed a hero. On November 18, 1963, his army unit was crossing a railway line, when a train suddenly shot out from behind a hill, and the horse drawing a gun carriage shied and got stuck on the tracks. A crash appeared inevitable, but Ouyang Hai darted up to the horse, made it rear, and pushed it off the track. The crash was avoided, but Ouyang Hai himself was hit by the train and died in hospital of grave injuries the same day.

The heroic deed was officially proclaimed to be the result of a study of Mao Tse-tung "thought", ignoring the fact that the Chinese revolutionary movement had had its heroes even before Mao Tse-tung had come up with his "thought".

Once Ouyang Hai was dead, the Maoists set to canonising him according to the rules of the Maoist hierarchy. Chin Ching-mai was given express instructions to "reflect, through Ouyang Hai's development, the changes that have taken place in the army over the past few years". The author himself did not scruple to cite these instructions in full in his article entitled "*The Song of Ouyang Hai: Conception and Creation*". He wrote that he had first acquainted himself with the hero by attending a special meeting to hear a speech by Tao Chu, Secretary of the CC's South-Central Bureau and also Political Commissar of the corresponding military district. In a supplement to the novel dated October 1965, the author wrote: "I would never have been able to write the novel without the care, consideration and instructions of commanding officers of every rank." He openly thanked every echelon—the commanding officers and political workers of army unit No. 6900, the Kweiyang District Party Committee, the editorial board of the magazine *Shouho*, and the army publishers, *Tsefangchün wenyi she*—for providing him with various documents, selecting concrete episodes, and helping to work out the plot and devise the characters.

It is now quite impossible to tell what Ouyang Hai had really been like: the man had been swallowed up by the

trumped-up hero. Chin Ching-mai himself described the ideal type of Maoist hero. He wrote: "At the start of the large-scale campaign to study Chairman Mao's writings in the army, the cultural level of many recruits was so low that they had very little to say for themselves. *Serve the People* was the first book they read right through upon joining the revolutionary army. But no sooner do they learn one sentence than they strive to implement it at once: they do whatever Chairman Mao tells them to, they are pure of purpose and do it heart and soul. They have attained true purity of soul and are entirely free of any egoism or self-interest. They are the new men of the 1960s, men who have risen from a primitive understanding to the mastery of Mao Tse-tung thought."

There is more to this than meets the eye. The propaganda of Mao Tse-tung's "thought" in the army started their implantation throughout the country. Use was made above all of the recruits' ignorance. A "low cultural level" in China verges on illiteracy. Even among young people from the countryside enrolled at the universities under a special quota, there were some who had not read a single book in their life; in fact, they were lucky to have read right through their textbook—the only book they had ever seen. Nor had they read any newspapers, having perhaps ever handled no more than two or three issues. When they get hold of Mao's article, "Serve the People"—the first thing they are given to read as tyros of Maoism—they have simply nothing to compare it with. It is only three pages long, although Chin Ching-mai toadied to Mao by calling it a book.

The Maoist ideal of man, as described in Chin Ching-mai's novel, is precisely this: he starts out with a mind that is innocent and "untainted" by any culture, verging on downright illiteracy, when he has "very little to say for himself"; then he makes a study of Mao writings, though not all of them but only those specially set aside for the common people; and then he applies Mao Tse-tung "thought" word for word in everyday life or, rather, he must know how to present any unusual, common-sense action as a deed "inspired" and "preordained" by Mao Tse-tung "thought". In this context, study chiefly means cramming, preferably not individual but collective cramming, which stultifies many people the more effectively.

Chin Ching-mai's statement clearly shows that the Maoists want to have a people with a low education level and downright lack of culture. Since they are incapable of developing the

country's national economy and have been holding back its technical advance, they are inevitably faced with the need to cramp the growth of people as well, for want of a better way to dispose of them. Besides, the Maoists can only feel secure with their system when the people have nothing to compare it with, whereas any book is a potential threat and education in itself is suspect, so that the "new and better people" have been reading nothing but Mao's writings.

Another thing is that the habit of living up to Mao's sayings, his "supreme instructions", whatever these may be, turns a man into something of a zombie. Blind compliance with Mao's ideas is a basic ingredient of his personality cult.

The Song of Ouyang Hai, a perfect specimen of Maoist propaganda, soon came to an inglorious end, of which more later.

In the course of our trip I could not help noticing that people were being moved from place to place under a dogged, blanket policy. Thus, none of the Sian Party functionaries I met was of local origin; Wang, for instance, had come from Shantung, and many others from Shanghai. This was also the practice among factory workers: the young people working at Sian factories had been recruited from all over the country, while local young people, when taken on as workers, were sent down to other provinces. I felt that this approach to the recruitment of personnel boiled down to an urge on the part of the central authorities to deprive local leaders and large organised collectives of any support among the native population.

I found the trip very interesting in many ways, but I shall keep to my story of the "cultural revolution". I noticed that the movement had been spreading out to the provinces very slowly for the time being.

In the small mining town of Tungchuan, where we had to stay overnight at a Mining Department hotel because of a sudden landslide, a local engineer came up to Ma and myself, and plied Ma with eager questions about the "cultural revolution" in Peking. He was surprised at Ma's answer, and kept saying:

"We haven't had anything like that, no, not yet...."

The road to Yen-an was a narrow, poorly paved affair, running across fields and villages. Our bus stopped at specially appointed spots, so that we had no chance of talking to the villagers. During a long stop-over one afternoon I decided to

take a walk. Our Chinese escorts were very much disturbed and took a long time deciding whether they should let me go beyond the tall fence. When they did, it was only with an attendant, and not into the village but out into the fields.

Looking out of the window and during the stops, I could not help seeing things it was impossible to hide: the total absence of farming machinery in the fields, the farmers' manual labour, and the tiny but perfectly groomed individual plots.

The threshing I watched was done by hand flail, and the grinding—by donkey: the blinkered animals trudged round and round in circles, turning the millstones. But the worst thing was to see men in the 20th century doing the work of draught animals: the shortage of horses and other draught animals was obviously disastrous, while trucks were very rare even along the Sian-Yenan highway, one of the few roads in China suitable for motor vehicles.

The village shops, or rather stalls, did not have on sale any meat, fish or milk products (the latter, however, is quite natural, for the Chinese do not keep any cows). Fabrics and haberdashery were available for rationing vouchers. One thing that fairly startled me was a big lump of salt on a counter so dirty that one would have hesitated to use it anywhere except on an animal farm. When I asked for whom it was intended and why there was no clean salt on sale, the shop assistant replied that the farmers preferred the dirty sort because it was cheaper.

"You mustn't think they eat it like that," he said, noticing my confusion. "They process it themselves: they evaporate it, clean it out, and obtain pure white salt. They simply don't want to pay any money for something they can do themselves."

I saw women use stone mortars to grind grain for their gruel. This was a static, fossilised world, without the slightest sign of technical progress, where human muscle-power was still the only source of energy.

I had, of course, known all along that the Chinese countryside was very backward, but here I was taken aback by the total lack of change. Surely, something new ought to have appeared by this time!

It had, but it was a case of new wine in old bottles: like centuries ago, great irrigation projects were being launched once again. The founders of ancient Chinese dynasties, who had usually started these projects in the old days, had used to herd the peasants together to perform a compulsory service for

the imperial treasure without any pay. The same method was also being used in our own day. But the building of gravity-feed irrigation networks without any pumping stations, the striving to make the canals as long as possible, and the poor quality of the engineering led to the waste of much labour-power: the fields girdled with canals dried up because the canals were empty. The rivers in Shensi Province were down to a bare trickle and could not water the fields laid out for irrigation, while the northern winds from the Gobi Desert sweeping these parched yellow hills deposited loess dust on the terrace fields along their slopes, fields that had been built up at the cost of prodigious effort. Some of the patches higher up, where the first crop had failed, had never been sown down again.

Yenan, a small town with a very beautiful pagoda, lies at the confluence of two mountain streams. The landscape here is much livelier: there is more water, the mountains are covered with green stunted trees and shrubbery, and down below, in the valleys, lie gardens, and fine fields of maize and Chinese millet.

For ten years (before Liberation) Yanan was the centre from which Mao Tse-tung exercised his leadership. During the war against Japan the town had been the target of many bombing raids, but its losses were very small because the people habitually lived in cave dwellings dug out in the thick of the loess walls. We were shown a bomb shelter in an extra-solid, monolithic granite rock, made especially for Mao Tse-tung.

He had often changed his place of residence in Yanan, apparently because of the bombings. In the yard of one of these, the guide showed us a stone on which Mao had sat and talked to his son, Mao An-ying, a graduate of Moscow University. Chairman Mao, said the guide, had told his son to go down to the countryside for re-education, describing the countryside as a "labour university". He had not shown any warm, paternal feeling for his son, said the guide and went on to extol his lack of feeling as a model of total self-denial.

What interested me most in Yanan was the May 1942 conference on literature and the arts, at which Mao had made two speeches, now become the Maoists' "sacred tablets" for their cultural policy.

Every spring, in May, China tends to "develop" an interest in literature and the arts. It is a season of mass-produced articles in the official press claiming various "victories" and "achievements" and cursing the opponents of "the Mao Tse-tung line in literature and the arts". This culture season is

designed specifically to mark the May 1942 conference, and the Peking leaders regard it as an occasion for settling scores and singing paeans of praise, and so prepare for it in advance.

In Yen-an, we were taken to see the spot where the conference had been held. It was an oblong room in a small one-storeyed building of grey brick. Several tables had been put together in the middle of the room to seat the most respected participants, with the rest of the company standing or sitting on benches along the walls. For the final meeting a bonfire had been laid out in the courtyard surrounded by a high, Chinese-style clay wall. Mao Tse-tung had sat taking notes of the speeches so as to reply to them in his concluding speech. A point to note is that these speeches have never been published, but they are still extant, for the Chinese press has quoted them from time to time. We were shown a faded photograph of the participants—workers in culture and young people from the Lu Hsün Academy of Arts, more than 50 in all.

The guide had apparently been instructed to tell us of Chou Yang, until recently—the spring of 1966—Deputy-Chief of the CPC Central Committee's Propaganda Department. The guide said that Chou Yang had made two speeches at the conference: the first had run counter to Mao Tse-tung "thought", whereas the second contained words of repentance for his mistakes, and pledges of his loyalty to Mao. These pledges, however, the guide went on, had all been false.

The Maoists had adopted the Yen-an conference as a model for carrying on ideological work among the intelligentsia. Mao himself had undoubtedly initiated the campaign of threats and intimidation, particularly in his speeches at the conference.

Apart from the conference house, and various other displays, museums and memorial spots, we were also taken to see some old men who had met Mao Tse-tung.

The guide first launched into a long oration on Chairman Mao's wisdom, his strong bonds with the people, and his historic walk to a nearby village on the eve of the debate on agriculture. After that, one of the old men, Yang Cheng-fu, spoke in similarly glowing terms about his meeting with the Chairman, but said next to nothing.

So I asked him myself where he had met Chairman Mao.

"I went out into the mountains to get some grass," he replied, "and suddenly I saw a remarkable man coming along the path towards me! I didn't know at the time that it was the great Chairman Mao himself, I took him for an important kanpu,¹

¹Kanpu—Party functionary.

for we knew that the Party CC was staying in some caves nearby."

"Was he walking all alone?"

"He was. Several soldiers were walking behind, but they were far away."

"Did you talk to him?"

"I did. Alas, wretched man that I am, I didn't know it was Chairman Mao himself!"

"What exactly did he say? You haven't forgotten his words, have you?"

"How could I? I remember every word he said. He asked me and I answered him. He asked me how big my family was, and how much grain each of us needed to keep going until the spring. He also asked me about the crops I grew and how high my yields were. Then he bid me farewell and turned back."

Mao Tse-tung had lived in seclusion, out of touch with the common people. On that occasion he was apparently trying to find out how big a tax he could levy on the peasants so as to get as much grain as possible. That is why he wanted to know a man's subsistence minimum in grain. It was fairly low, because throughout the spring and summer the peasants lived on fruit, vegetables and other greens, while grain, which could be stored up and transported, was used exclusively as a winter food.

The hardship of those days had perhaps justified the appropriation of all possible surplus food, but an economic policy of this kind was now simply preposterous.

Local guides would tell us with pride that Yen-an had cradled Mao Tse-tung "thought". Shortly after we left Yen-an I had occasion to see for myself that the Maoist line in respect of the countryside had not changed since the Yen-an days. That was in the neighbouring province of Honan, after our visit to Loyang and Chengchou.

At Loyang we went to see the large tractor works built with Soviet assistance. I asked the director, workers and Party Committee people when they had come to work at the factory. Their answers were almost identical: 1961 or 1962, whereas the factory had been started back in 1958. None of its 12,000 workers had seen any Soviet specialists, although at first there had been many of them here, working side by side with the Chinese. The Soviet specialists had gone home, but what had become of those they had taught and worked with? These people had disappeared without trace in the vast country.

First in Loyang and then in Chengchou we heard news of some important developments in Peking. The CPC Central Committee's plenary meeting, held, as the local tatzupaos put it, in the presence of the "revolutionary masses", had approved of the cultural revolution.

Official red tatzupaos with news from the capital were flooding the countryside, reporting first on the CC Plenary Meeting and its sixteen points about the "cultural revolution", and then on Mao's meeting with the "revolutionary masses". Parades and demonstrations were being staged to mark every fresh item of official news, but I did not see any Peking-style violence anywhere.

On our way to the Linhsian District of Honan I sat next to an employee of the Agricultural Department of the CPC's Honan Provincial Committee. He talked with me in a very friendly way and asked me about irrigation in the USSR. He remarked that he had been to Chita and Khabarovsk in the Soviet Union. Our short conversation impressed itself on my mind, so that a year later I was not very much surprised to hear that the "cultural revolution" in Honan was meeting with resistance. When I heard that I also recalled a prominently displayed pamphlet by Liu Shao-chi at the memorial museum of some late functionary. The real meaning of that came through to me only much later, when the accusations against "Chairman Liu" had been made public. At the time, however, I did not realise the remarkable connection between the pamphlet and the stand taken by the Honan Communists.

Our trip to the Linhsian District was somewhat unexpected, for the Chinese had taken their final decision only at Chengchou. The Chinese are usually reluctant to allow foreigners into the countryside, and we all thought that they had granted us this favour in view of the exceptional circumstances, upon receiving orders from Peking to keep us away from the capital for as long as possible because events there were coming to a head. The trip lasted an extra three days, but our hosts did not apparently mind the additional expense.

Linhsian lies in the centre of China, where Chinese civilisation had its beginnings. From Chengchou, the provincial centre, we went by train to Anyang, and then on by bus to Linhsian. A short way from Anyang lies the site of an ancient city, China's first historical capital, the seat of the Shang dynasty in the 14th-12th centuries B.C., but unfortunately it was not on our itinerary and we passed it without stopping.

From Anyang, which lies in flat country, the road climbed

up into the foothills of Taihan Shan. In the past, Linhsian had suffered from such severe draughts, with frequent crop failures and famines, that even drinking water had been in short supply. Nowadays it was an advanced, model district.

The sky was a dazzling white, the heat scorching, and the soil dry and yellow. A few straggling shrubs on the slopes of the steep, pale-yellow hills around us were grey with dust. The roads here run along river valleys, and the bus easily crossed the shallow, dried-up stream-bed.

For a whole decade, the population of the district had worked on a comprehensive irrigation system. They had built the canals with their own hands, without any machinery or state credits, and had irrigated 70 per cent of their arable land.

Considering that unskilled manpower was the only unlimited resource, a valid engineering approach was one that required small material and vast labour inputs. They relied almost exclusively on local resources, cement being the only thing they bought from the state.

The Linhsian farmers put in a great deal of effort. They used ordinary picks to dig tunnels in the mountain side and get the water flowing from across the ridge. From the mouth of each of these tunnels they laid dozens of kilometres of unique conduits. These were sunk in the rock and were made to wind gently down into the valley so that the water flowed freely along them, with elevated aqueducts built across narrow gorges and even two fairly broad valleys. To reduce evaporation, the conduits were made deep, narrow and fast-flowing.

The farmers had no brick, for the district had no coal of its own to burn the bricks. But they found a way out: the whole population, especially women, children and old people, set to hewing out stone slabs. They took the stone from nearby hills (one rock disappeared altogether) and turned it into rough-hewn blocks, each the size of two bricks, using these to line the beds of the waterways and build dams. These hand-made slabs did not cost the district anything: they were made locally and carried to the required spot in baskets suspended on bamboo yokes. In the autumn and winter the daily turnout was as high as 150,000 persons and even at harvest-time the figure was never below 10,000.

"Did the people have to be made to do this work?" I asked a local functionary who was showing us about.

"We had a tough time only during the first two years. At first the farmers didn't have any confidence in themselves, they

didn't believe they could get the water flowing. But then it became easier, the people worked with a will."

This sounded very plausible, for the water shortage meant starvation for the farmers. It goes without saying that they worked free of charge.

"But why didn't the state do anything to help the people?"

"State resources go into large-scale projects! It doesn't give any credits to agriculture."

That, unfortunately, was true as well. The Maoists did not want to squander any money on boosting food production, but lavished the country's main resources on their great power policy.

The valley was now girdled with high-rise aqueducts, which branched out in a network of smaller conduits, also carefully faced with slabs, carrying the water down to the fields. This eased the farmers' lot. They could now grow sweet potatoes (one crop a year) or wheat and maize (wheat in the spring and maize in the autumn). Their yields increased by 85 per cent, and Linhsian was no longer the famine area it once was.

But had the irrigation scheme solved the problem of the farmers' welfare? No, that had been impossible because of the low-grade labour involved. For all their selfless effort, their work in the fields was still manual, unproductive, and with a low output of marketable produce.

What made it worse was that the farmers had to give up most of their surplus produce without compensation. Although the state tax, which the peasants pay in grain, never exceeds 20 per cent of the crop, the Maoists have been getting a lot more grain free of charge through so-called voluntary funds, whose size is fixed virtually anew every year, depending on the size of the crop, and this leaves the farmers a bare minimum for their own use. In 1966, for instance, despite a bumper crop, the farmers got no more than the subsistence minimum they had been getting before, but instead there was a spate of meetings and speeches about the voluntary funds. I once asked a local Party functionary what was the most profitable crop to grow in Linhsian.

"It all depends on who benefits," was his unexpected reply.

It turned out that the provincial and district authorities, acting upon orders from the centre, were making the farmers grow wheat and maize. Over two consecutive harvests in the area these two crops had the highest yields, but the main consideration was that grain was easier to carry, store, deliver, take stock of and control in the harvesting. The farmers knew full

well that under the existing setup there would never be enough grain to feed the family.

So despite the efforts of their superiors, the farmers grew more and more sweet potatoes every year. There was virtually no point in collecting the tax in sweet potatoes, for these were very hard to carry, could be taken no further than the district centre, and did not keep for more than a month. Accordingly, the sweet potatoes were left to the farmers themselves and were their staple food. But although the farmers treated their potatoes with extreme care, handling every single tuber with great precaution, like a precious thing, the potatoes did not last out the winter, so that for about two months, before the spring vegetables got under way, the farmers simply could not do without the grain. But to get some grain for their food they had to apply for permission to the authorities, who thus had it in their power to decide the fate of any family. The amounts they gave varied from one family to another, so that one can well imagine the immense power they wielded over the local population.

We were taken to see Tatsaiyuan village, whose 1,300 inhabitants made up a production brigade. The brigade leader told me that at harvest-time everyone over eight years of age—987 persons in all—were out in the fields.

We went to see several peasant houses. One of these, for instance, had a square plot framed by a clay wall and two blank walls of the house itself, with all the windows facing the yard. The low long building had two dwelling rooms, the first of these serving as hall and store-room: it had several five-foot-high clay jars for storing grain.

The kitchen was in an outhouse. I asked the farmer what he used for fuel. It turned out that twice a year the farmers sent a number of carts to a neighbouring district, where coal was to be had in open-cut mines. The farmers did everything themselves, and thus got the coal free of charge.

The farmers built their houses long and narrow, so as to make them easier to roof. The roofing consisted of twigs and sticks, for in that woodless area wood is priceless. The windows were glazed with carefully fitted-in bits of glass, with the window-frames made to match the shape of the glass rather than the other way round. The frames were made of bamboo brought in from other areas and were also costly. But it was the door that was the most prized possession of a peasant household: it was made of real planks of solid southern wood and fixed on wooden spigots.

"How many years does a door like that last? Have you had it long?" I asked an elderly housewife through an interpreter, because the Honan dialect, though close to the Peking one, was hard for me to understand.

"I couldn't say how old it is, but we've had it ever since grandfather's time."

The door was of sandal-wood.

Another house had no door at all, but only a thick wicker curtain. The hosts told me that they, too, had once had a sandal-wood door, but during the war a Japanese officer who had stayed in their house for the night had ordered the door to be broken up into firewood to cook his breakfast. Burning sandal-wood, he had said, had a very pleasant smell. Even now, more than 20 years later, our hosts blanched with hatred as they told us of the barbarous deed. The family had been unable to buy a new door ever since, for sandal-wood was expensive; because of a Japanese officer's whim, they had been suffering from cold every winter.

Every household we were taken to had one or even two pigs—tall, lean, agile, with long black-and-white bristles. Since they were poorly fed, they did not yield any lard but only meat, which the farmers had on great holidays.

The farmers had their personal plots just outside the village. These were tiny but well-watered and manured, with every clot of soil being literally hand-ground. From early spring to late autumn the farmers used their plots to grow vegetables: first a green that looked like spinach, but rougher and with much bigger yields, and later leek, egg-plants and autumn turnips.

August was the egg-plant season, and the plots were overgrown with something that looked like small trees about a metre tall, with giant blue tomato-like fruit, round rather than bean-shaped, hanging from the stalks. Along the pathways the plots were fringed with Chinese hemp, which the farmers used to press oil from.

Life in the villages went its round virtually without any money: there was no market in the area, and Anyang, the nearest town, was a long way off. All the money the farmers ever got went to pay for their clothes, allotted by ration vouchers, but although the allocation quotas were low and it was not every year that one could make a new pair of trousers, the peasants never had enough money to redeem all their vouchers.

Our party of foreigners was given a warm welcome by the villagers.

VIII. THE AUGUST POGROMS

CONVERSATION IN A TAXI-CAB, HUNGWEIPING LAIR.
"RED GUARDS" IN PEKING, FEVERISH DECADE. POGROM.
MURDER IN THE RAILWAY-STATION
SQUARE. SOVIET EMBASSY BLOCKADED

Our train pulled into Peking Station on the evening of August 20. The air was damp and cool after a recent thunderstorm, which had left puddles on the platform and in the station square. Hsui, a man from the University, met us in the station underpass. He told us, with an unusually preoccupied look, that he had a taxi waiting for us.

Ma stared at him in astonishment: not a taxi, surely! That would be a breach of the economy drive. Foreigners were always met and seen off in University chauffeur-driven cars, the proper and also the more economical way.

"The Office has been forbidden to take out any of the cars, the hungweipings are now in control of the garage," Hsui explained tersely.

"What do you mean, the hungweipings?!" Ma asked with a puzzled look.

"Why, didn't you know? Two hungweiping detachments have been set up at the University."

Ma was astounded: there had been changes, indeed!

In the taxi Hsui asked me politely whether I had liked the trip, but before I had time to open my mouth, Ma had launched into a running, enthusiastic account:

"It's been a very, very good trip! We've been to Yen-an, the revolutionary base, and seen all the places where Chairman Mao once lived and worked. I've got some memento badges, photos and envelopes of stamps for my comrades, with very handsome pictures of the Chairman!"

"And we've seen the Chairman in Tien An Men! Twice!"

There was a look of despair on Ma's face.

"I myself have seen him twice," Hsui continued with pride, "but some have seen him as many as three times. Chairman Mao is in good health, he's in very good health!"

"How I've fallen behind you all!" Ma complained bitterly.

"Ah, but you have been to Yenan," said Hsui by way of consolation.

Hsui was itching to tell Ma of what had taken place, and finally decided to overlook my presence.

"Chairman Mao has called on the revolutionary young to set up hungweiping detachments to protect him from his enemies and keep our state red. More than twelve detachments were at first set up at the University, but now they have been merged into two large detachments, the 'Ching kangshan'¹ and the 'Mao Tse-tungism'."

"What's the difference between the two?"

"There's a big difference. First, they're made up of students from different departments, and second, they differ in fighting spirit...."

"Have you joined either of the two?" Ma interrupted him.

"Not yet. I'm a Party member, you know, and they don't take us on without a trial period."

Ma sat still. His silence was so eloquent that it made me look round at him. Fingers dug into his knees and eyes in a fixed stare, he seemed to be thinking feverishly, for he himself was a Party member.

"It's terrible to have been away from Peking for so long! How I envy all of you who've seen Chairman Mao!" he said at last, and there was bewilderment in his voice.

"I'm now in my trial period with the 'Ching kangshan' detachment," Hsui resumed his account with some spirit. "Since the Committee for the Cultural Revolution was elected, we have been taking turns in running the Office—two other comrades and myself. I've just had to work with the Committee, you know; there is nothing else to be done," he apologised, "even though our detachment differs with it on some points...."

"But has anyone come out against the Committee?" asked Ma with barely disguised agitation.

"The 'Mao Tse-tungism' detachment. They want to disband the Committee altogether."

¹Ching kangshan—the Chinese Communists' strongpoint in 1928.

"What's happening at the Philological Department?"

"Most of the students, especially in the first and the second year, back the 'Mao Tse-tungism' detachment."

The wet, dimly lit streets were all but deserted, and the taxi made its way across the city almost without stopping. As we drove up to the University gates, we were surrounded by a roaring crowd.

Dozens of faces peered in at the windows, dozens of hands grabbed at the small body of the car.

Hsui told me to sit still. He and Ma leaned out of the doors and shouted at the top of their voices:

"Car of the Foreign Students' Office! Pass certified by the Cultural Revolution Committee!"

Among the crowd of students I also saw many schoolchildren.

Hsui was frantically waving a slip of paper. Two young men wearing red armbands and Mao badges came marching up to us from the check-point.

"Let them pass," one of them said and motioned with his hand, as he recognised Hsui.

The car rolled slowly into the main lane and on to the hostel.

No sooner had we put down our bags in our own room than Ma, advising me to take a rest, went away not to return for the night.

The following morning I dropped in at the Office to tell them that I had been left without any breakfast: the dining-room people did not know that I had come back.

"Don't worry, everything will be all right," I was reassured. "The cultural revolution has kept everyone very busy. The main thing now is to make as little fuss as possible."

Equipment officer Wang told me that the University was being guarded by hungweipings: they were still very young and were liable to make mistakes, he said. They would gradually get used to me and would know me personally, but in the meantime there could well be some misunderstandings.

"I've been away for no more than a fortnight, but very much has changed: the hungweipings, new slogans, new tatzupaos, new Mao's sayings. Mao Tse-tung alone is all over the place."

"Why, there's also Lin Piao," he said guardedly, and pointed to an ornamental poster with the "closest associate's" sayings and a facsimile of his handwriting.

"Anyway, I don't see the point in hanging out these sayings everywhere."

Wang realised that it was time to give me a "rebuff" and said impressively:

"Chairman Mao's writings are so profound that to master them one has to study them every day for twenty years. Only then can one hope to make correct use of Chairman Mao's thought! Our Party says so."

There our conversation came to an end.

The University grounds were quiet and deserted. As I strolled through the littered park, along the lanes of blossoming shrubbery rimmed with tatzupaos, I met no more than a few straggling students. I wondered what had become of the "revolutionary masses". The tatzupaos on either side of the lanes belonged to the two opposite hungweiping detachments: they hung facing each other, exchanging abuse, so that the air appeared to be thick with invective and hysterical screams. Indeed, I had never seen anything like it before.

The posters were mainly notices of meetings, trials and "revolutionary operations". So that was why the University grounds were quiet and deserted: the hungweipings had left early for their "revolutionary operations" in the city.

I glanced through the tatzupao headlines and realised that over the past month their tenor had changed a great deal; they were now ruder and more abusive, and urged action: "Root out! Smash up! Put down! Rout! Destroy! Ferret out! Expose!"

An innocent-looking "Mao Tse-tungist" tatzupao, entitled "The great leader, Mao Tse-tung, teaches us thrift and economy", insisted that by way of "thrift" and "loyalty to Mao Tse-tung thought" all those convicted in the course of the "cultural revolution" should be put to death as soon as possible—by September 1, and that the "revolutionary masses" should "stage a swift and summary trial" of all the "enemies within the University". The tatzupao also urged an all-out effort in preparing a "revolutionary thermonuclear war" to "purge the three kinds of blight: American imperialism, modern revisionism and reaction". "Modern revisionism" was suggested as the first target.

Another tatzupao ran: "Ten questions to ask of Comrade Liu Shao-chi", and I stopped to read it, for a name mentioned in a tatzupao boded ill for its owner, even where the accusations amounted to utter nonsense. The names of Chiang Ching, Chen Po-ta and Chou En-lai were a different matter: their speeches took up yards of space, with their names printed or framed in red out of respect for their "revolutionary spirit".

But here was Liu Shao-chi being plicd with malicious questions.

The authors were asking the Chairman of the PRC how it had come about that he had sent over his "working groups" to "suppress the cultural revolution" and how he intended to answer for his crime before the "revolutionary masses". Why had his wife gone on a visit to Indonesia wearing a skirt, a pair of earrings and even a necklace? Why did his article on a Communist's self-improvement have only one Mao's quotation to ten quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, notwithstanding the fact that "Mao Tse-tung thought is the summit of Marxism-Leninism" and that "Mao Tse-tung has to be quoted not ten times less, but ten—a hundred—a thousand—ten thousand—times more?"

The campaign against Liu Shao-chi had just started, and he was still being addressed as "Comrade". But the attack was neither accidental nor the only one. "Chairman Liu's" portraits, which had once had nearly as much standing at the University as those of Mao himself, had all been taken down.

I also came across "ten charges against Kuo Mo-jo", the well-known scientist and man of letters. Back in April, before the start of the massive movement, Kuo Mo-jo had come out with a penitential speech, renouncing all his past creative work and vowing to "make an earnest study of Mao Tse-tung thought". His recantation had been a perfect piece of self-abasement. On May 5, 1966, the Soviet newspaper, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, carried the speech without any comment. In China, it was broadcast over the radio. One saw it then as something of a straw-in-the-wind, a warning, a political move by a wily public figure. But at the time I wondered whether his penitent speech would save him. Indeed, the "cultural revolution" had given him three months' grace, but now it had come down on him with another "ten charges". The rather wordy tatzupao accused him of making translations, that is, "spreading foreign culture"; of past contacts with Soviet citizens; of "worshipping all things foreign"; writing historical plays and other works to "propagate feudalism and reaction"; devoting scant attention to Mao Tse-tung "thought", which meant "bourgeois ideology"; and even of "bourgeois nationalism", for Kuo Mo-jo had once been a minister in the Kuomintang government. They had taken stock of all his offences, but stopped short of issuing a public condemnation: what saved him was his speech of self-abasement, an act no other prominent Chinese writer had risked to perform.

On the whole, these new developments left me with an oppressive feeling of impending doom, and I returned to my hostel troubled and dejected.

Ma was back by midday, looking pale after a sleepless night. He left his things unpacked and vigorously set about more urgent business, that of pasting over his side of the room with various prints and posters. A large colour portrait of Mao Tse-tung stared at me across the room from the centre of the wall. Mao portraits were now being sold at slashed prices, having recently been classed among the "prime necessities". But there was a shortage of these portraits in Peking, for they had become something of a charm against any arbitrary action, just as cheap prints in old, feudal China were believed to possess the power of exorcising evil spirits and laying ghosts.

On either side of the portrait, Ma fixed up some printed sayings of Mao's and handwritten ones of Lin Piao's. Over the table, he pasted up a colour print from an oil painting, showing a young Mao with a big shock of hair and a large escort standing on top of a mountain, while a troop of men led by a youth in a military uniform are seen climbing up towards him from below.

Ma pointed to the youth and said.

"That's Lin Piao! Chairman Mao's best disciple and his most loyal fellow-fighter."

Having done with his posters, Ma went to bed to catch up on his sleep and I decided to go out into the city.

The first thing I saw in the city was that all the bookshops were closed.

The walls and shutters of the bookshops in the Hsitang Arcade, one of my favourite haunts, were papered over with posters saying: "You bookworms! Stop selling your reactionary trash at once!" One hall near the entrance, however, was still open: on the right-hand side, they were selling Mao's writings (at cut prices) and next to these—various propaganda publications containing "cultural revolution" documents, and on the left—all manner of Mao's sayings and printed portraits. People were crowding round the stalls, queueing up for these "prime necessities", with the "lucky" ones leafing through the newly bought gay-coloured sheets. I caught sight of an old book-seller who had sold me dozens of books: he had a tag on his chest saying "reactionary element", and walked about with a watering-can, sprinkling the stone floor. His pale, puffy face was patched with strips of plaster. He walked past me without any sign of recognition. Schoolchildren in their

early teens wearing red armbands stood looking over the shop-assistants' shoulders or strolled about in the crowd of customers, who parted to let them pass. Some boys at the entrance were putting up another poster: "Stop the spread of poison! Down with the reactionary book-trade! Let us turn the bookshops into a stronghold of Mao Tse-tung thought!"

I went up to the least crowded stall, offering bulky volumes of Mao's writings, and asked the assistant when the second-hand bookshops were due to open. But before the assistant could say a word, several boys with red armbands surrounded me and one of the older boys explained:

"The shops are closed" for cleansing and arrangement of internal order. Many of the books they had on sale do not mention Chairman Mao, while others are reactionary or revisionist. Those who used to peddle them are to answer before the masses."

He offered me some Mao books. I refused and went out into the street. Some of the shop windows were shuttered or covered up with appeals, while the rest displayed a varied assortment of Mao busts or gilt-framed portraits against a background of red fabric folded into radiating plaits. The plate window of a shop selling records on the other side of the street was smashed to bits. I crossed over. The checkered side-walk paved, like all the other central streets in Peking, with flat grey tiles was covered with a layer of broken records. I stirred the shards with my foot and dug up a red label with the title of a Chinese folk song. I noticed that a boy with a red armband leaning against the wall near the entrance was watching my movements. Some other schoolchildren were roaming about the devastated shop and talking among themselves. I went up to the boy at the door and asked:

"Why have you broken this record? Isn't it a Chinese folk song?"

"It's a bad song," he replied with a polite smile. "It doesn't say a word about Chairman Mao. Songs of that kind spread poison, and this shop was a black den of bourgeois ideology! The only songs we are keeping are those about Mao Tse-tung."

Next door was an optician's. There were no customers in the shop, but only a few hungweipings—boys a little older than those in the neighbouring shop—were loitering about the place. A slogan stretched above the counter selling dark glasses and expensive rimmed spectacles said: "Rims for the bourgeois scoundrels, spongers and villains of the whole

country". Another slogan in the background said: "Down with the bourgeois habit of wearing dark glasses!"

I went on along Hsitang's central street. In the next block, another batch of schoolchildren were sacking hairdresser shops and tailoring establishments, "hotbeds of the bourgeois way of life". They were inserting in the shop windows peremptory lists of forbidden hair styles: one was not to wear a parting, a fluffed-up quiff, long hair, combed-back hair, and so on.

An ultimatum on the door of a tailoring outfit put a ban on coats and trousers of a "foreign cut", and women were forbidden to wear "foreign-style" skirts. Any offenders, the ultimatum warned, would be punished promptly and mercilessly.

At a bus stop, some hungweiping picketers, led by an older youth, a student by his looks, were waiting with scissors in their hands. When a bus stopped, they would line up on either side of the door to form a corridor, and would let the passengers out one by one. No one even tried to protest: all came out silently, with bowed heads. The picketers would seize every girl with long hair and cut off her plaits without much ado. The girls did not resist. The pavement was strewn with plaits—long and short, thick and thin, some tied with ribbons, others with thick coloured synthetic threads, which were then fashionable among Chinese girls.

"Why are you doing this? What's the idea?" I asked the boys when another group of girls had had their hair cropped and had been let off.

"We are fighting old bourgeois morals," a young picketer replied. "Plaits are a Soviet revisionist custom, and we won't have it observed in Mao Tse-tung's red China. Chinese girls should wear short revolutionary hair."

I pointed to a passing cyclist and asked the boy what his hair-do meant. The elderly man had half his head shaved clean, from forehead to back, while the other half still had some long, sleek hair on it.

The hungweipings told me eagerly that three days earlier an ultimatum forbidding hair partings had been duplicated at some secondary school, but that some scoundrels had decided to keep their partings, and so a special patrol was posted at one of the crossroads to mete out punishment in that way.

"He shall go about like that for ten days! We'll see to it that he does."

A short way off stood a once-famous Szechwan restaurant, that province being known throughout China for its red-pep-

per dishes. The restaurant had a narrow corridor leading out into the thoroughfare, while its actual premises were at the back of the building. I turned in there not so much for the sake of the food as to have a chance to come to my senses, but found the entrance already pasted over with curses against the manager, a "counter-revolutionary element". "Sons-of-bitches! Give up your 5 per cent at once! Long live state control!"

The restaurant was a mixed, state-private enterprise. The hungweipings had suddenly demanded that the capitalists, who were still getting a fixed 5-per cent interest from the state as redemption of the capital they had invested, should in effect be eliminated. They had been receiving the payments for many years, with no end in sight. Now the hungweipings wanted to put a stop to the arrangement.

I went inside. A strip of cloth across the corridor said the place was a "dining-room for hungweipings and the revolutionary masses". A stout old woman tagged "exploiting element" was busily sweeping the floor under the announcement.

The old menu consisting of dozens of dishes had been torn down and replaced by the standard one: cabbage, noodles, and steamed bread. Several hungweipings supervised the doling-out of the food. A helping of smelly and unsavory-looking last year's cabbage, black noodles and grey bread was to be had very cheap, for a few coins, but most of the customers tried to get something more palatable. I queued up for some cold minced meat. The tiny dollops of minced chicken, mutton and pork, which looked very good, were being served in saucers.

I asked the woman at the counter to give me a bigger helping and was prepared to pay for it, but she stopped in sudden confusion, for it was not a matter of money. A gloomy youth with a red armband popped up at her side.

"Alright for a foreigner! Give him some more," he ordered.

She gave me about 150 grams of chicken, and I realised that the size of the helpings had been fixed by the hungweipings. I had just caught sight of a placard over the service counter saying: "Obey Chairman Mao! Save on food! Don't gorge yourself!"

There were quite a few workers in the queue. Wages at the modernised plants were higher than elsewhere, and they could undoubtedly afford a piece of chicken. Their faces had a sombre look.

Plate in hand, I went up to the beer barrel. Chinese beer is very good and strong, and reminds one of the best German brands. I was surprised to find that instead of mugs, the beer now came in glasses.

I asked whether I could have a full mug. The inevitable hungweiping on duty by the barrel sized me up and agreed:

"Alright for a foreigner."

I was the only one who got a full mug of beer, the rest had to be content with a glass full.

I decided that I had had my fill of the new stage of the "cultural revolution" for the day and took a bus back to the University. At one of the stops, a patrol of about 15 hungweipings burst into the bus. They elbowed their way among the passengers and eyed them with impudence. My neighbour caught their eye. He was a man of about 40, just beginning to grow bald. His thin hair was neatly parted, and he was holding an old briefcase in his lap.

"Over here!" the youngster who led the way called out to the others, and they at once stood in a tight circle around us. "What's the epoch you are living in, you scoundrel?" yelled the youngster at the passenger and, seizing him by the hair, pushed back his head. "You've forgotten that you're living under Mao Tse-tung! You wear a bourgeois parting and haul about a briefcase, you bloodsucker! You've gone bourgeois, you damned degenerate! You've forgotten all about the cultural revolution!" To drive the message home, the hungweiping knocked the man's head a couple of times against the aluminium window frame. "Why haven't you cut your hair up to now?"

"I've been very busy.... All sorts of meetings, you know, haven't had the time," the man muttered, lips trembling and face white with fear.

"This is our final warning! You're in for it if we catch you again!" the leader threatened.

At the following stop the hungweipings got off, and the man put a trembling hand to his rumpled hair, trying to smooth away the unfortunate parting. We got down together at the University: he may have even been on the staff there, for all I know.

The days went by, and in another few weeks' time I was to return home. The "cultural revolution" had now spilled over from the institutes and universities into the city streets, jeopardising my plans to get the books I wanted, for the bookshops

had now become the hungweipings' main target. I thought I would have a go at Liulichang Street, in Peking's old quarter, famed for its book rows for nearly three centuries. It was lined with shops selling antiques and second-hand books, and it also housed the celebrated Jungpaochai, a studio producing matchless copies of "kuohua" paintings.

In the bus on the way to Liulichang, a group of schoolgirls took turns at reading out Mao quotations. Then they struck up a song, urging the passengers to join in, and the weary people going home after a day's work picked up the tune. One young worker pretended to be singing, but barely moved his lips, forcing out the words in praise of the "Great Helmsman".

"Why aren't you singing, comrade?" the woman sitting next to him suddenly asked.

"But I am, I am!" he hastened to assure her and set to singing with fresh zeal.

Suddenly one of the schoolgirls came over towards me, pushing the passengers aside. She placed herself in front of me, holding a little red book in the form of a pad, and began reading out Mao quotations in a ringing voice, looking up at me from time to time. She then fixed me with a rigid stare and began to quote by heart.

I got down on Liulichang Street and went over to the painting studio. I was in luck: the shop was open. But what on earth had become of the book-makers painted by the masters of miniature, the long wall-scrolls with birds, flowers and landscapes, and even the paintings about the new life after Liberation? Instead of these, the shop was crowded with lithographs of Mao—smiling, writing, smoking, or with eyes screwed up. It was Mao the Sun, Mao among the soldiers, and numerous Maos on a mountain top. There were also many posters with Mao's sayings. True, one counter was still selling black ink, paints and brushes, but these must have been ranked among the prime necessities, as means of portraying Mao Tse-tung.

Greatly disappointed, I walked on along Liulichang Street, but the curio shop, the jeweller's, and the shops selling ancient editions and second-hand books were also closed. I saw a row of barred doors pasted over with abusive slogans. Here was one of my favourites, a shop selling prints. I peered through the glass door: it was still untouched. The statuettes and ceramic figurines were still on their shelves, and the prints heaped in a corner. I used to buy these every time I got my allowance.

Indeed, Liulichang looked as if it had been hit by a hurricane.

I walked along some twisting lanes, where a man had to squeeze his way past cycle rickshaws, and out into Tachalar Street. That was another trading-centre, with shops selling women's clothes, footwear and children's goods, ancient chemist's shops, an optician's, and a host of others. An ultimatum in the window of a shoe-store said: "Away with bourgeois models! No sale of ideologically rotten goods!" and "Revolutionary masses, down with leather shoes! Let us give up the ways of the exploiting classes!"

The counters of a department store I entered carried "safety" notices: "Ideologically rotten goods have been removed from sale!" Notices in the shop windows said: "Comrades revolutionary customers! If you see any bad, ideologically inconsistent goods in our store you are welcome to express your opinion, which we always treasure."

Suddenly I saw several hungweipings leading a young man across the shop floor. Three of them were hurrying him along, while the rest followed behind. His arms were wrenched up behind, so that his elbows dug into his back and his head was howed low.

"A jet plane," I heard someone whisper.

The doubled-up figure of the fast-moving man had, indeed, the outline of a jet plane.

In another minute they were gone, and the crowd of shoppers closed in behind them as if nothing had ever happened.

I soon realised that I would be unable to buy any Chinese tea set as a present for my wife: there was no longer anything beautiful or national on sale.

I had about 100 yuan, which I had meant to spend on books. But since I was not to buy any books, I thought I would buy something else at the foreigners' shop a short way from Wangfuching.

I had a hard time getting to the centre, for the busses were overcrowded. Wangfuching, a trading thoroughfare, had also suffered a good deal from the "cultural revolution": signboards had been torn down, and shop-windows broken and papered over. The hungweiping pickets' explosive activity had terrorised not only the shop assistants, but the shoppers as well, so that there were very few of them in sight. The foreigners' shop, however, still had some goods on sale and, what is more important, was still quiet.

I had just left the shop and taken a few steps down the street, when a man suddenly rolled down the steps from one of the doorways and fell flat on the pavement in front of me. He was about 50; his clothes were all torn and smeared with dirt, his swollen face was hattered and his body bruised. Four hungweipings followed, kicking him. They jerked him to his feet and, twisting out his arms, dragged him down the street, knocking him about as they went. The people in the street did not slacken their pace and pretended not to notice the scene.

I wanted to take a bus or a trolley back to the University, but the queue was a mile long, and I waited in vain for almost an hour under the scorching sun. I was just beginning to despair when a stranger's voice hailed me from behind. I looked round. It was a student with a hungweiping armband.

"Hello!" he said. "You're from the Pedagogical University, aren't you? Going home?"

I said I was.

"Come over to our bus. We're also going back to the University."

He pointed to a bus that had stopped nearby because of a traffic jam at the crossroads. The words "special vehicle" were chalked across its side, and it was decked out in Mao portraits and sayings. The bus was packed with hungweipings. I got in.

"Where have you been?" I asked the student next to me.

"On a revolutionary operation. Every day one of our groups goes out to Wangfuching to establish revolutionary order. It was our turn today."

"Whose bus is this?"

"We have confiscated it at one establishment for the needs of the revolution."

"Do you know that your law forbids Chinese to talk to foreigners?"

"Ah, but that was before the cultural revolution. That law does not apply to us hungweipings. Besides, we should spread the ideas of the cultural revolution, shouldn't we?"

He told me that all day long they had been making the round of the central areas and confiscating "superfluous" furniture, valuables and luxury goods from the inhabitants.

"What do you do with all that—destroy it?"

"No, we take the furniture to second-hand stores and sell it there, while the valuables we hand over straight to the state."

As we passed Hsintsekow, a lively trading spot, the bus had to slow down, for the road, to say nothing of the pavement, was blocked up with old furniture—bedsteads, cupboards,

sofas, trunks, and stacks and stacks of other old stuff. The small furniture store, where the hungweipings had deposited the confiscated things, had clogged the whole street with them. The amazing thing was that some people actually bought the furniture that had just been taken away from someone else.

"We're now in the great epoch of Mao Tse-tung and are all making revolution," my neighbour amiably explained. "These days we don't stand on ceremony with all sorts of rascals."

"But the degenerates within the Communist Party are our chief enemies," added a girl standing next to us. "They have forgotten that they owe their all to our sun, Chairman Mao. We confiscate their luxury goods and help them to purify their minds."

"But who buys these things?" I could not help asking.

"Revolutionary comrades," the hungweiping answered without hesitation.

"Things are secondary, it's consciousness, ideas, that are most important," the girl added. "If a man lives up to Mao Tse-tung thought, accepts it sincerely, opens his soul out to it, he will never be daunted by any things, he is then master of all things. But Party degenerates are alien to our Chairman's thought!"

"But how do you catch Chairman's enemies?" I asked. "How can you be sure that no one escapes?"

"There are many of us. Schoolchildren, the young forerunners of the revolution, lead the way. They know all that's happening in their quarter, and tell us about it. That's why we never make a mistake."

At night, a bellowing roar was again heard from the University stadium: several thousand hungweipings back from the city had gathered to "sum up the day's work and exchange revolutionary experience". When I left the dining-room after supper, the grounds were deserted. Two upset women standing near the doorway of a block of flats for married teachers suddenly called out to me. I went up to them.

"Look what's happening here! How terrible! They left two hours ago. Come in and have a look!"

"Who's they?"

"The hungweipings."

They took me up the stairway, which was unlit "for the sake of economy". It was a four-storey brick house, a very fine house by Peking standards. The only thing it lacked was gas,

and food had to be cooked on stoves fuelled with coal briquettes.

I asked who lived in the flat we were about to enter.

"Its owner had been on the Party bureau of one of the departments. He was taken away long ago."

We entered a modest two-roomed flat, where everything was topsy-turvy: beds, trunks and cupboards turned upside down, clothes and linen strewn all over the floor in one room, a heap of smoking ashes on the cement floor in the other. The ashes were all that was left of the family library.

The women told me what had happened.

The hungweipings had come in around noon. There had been about a dozen of them, and also two "revolutionary" teachers to act as witnesses. None of the hungweipings were students of the department where the master of the flat had taught. They started by confiscating the furniture, which they hauled downstairs and took away in a truck. Then they set about giving the family an "ideological education".

"Where are your Chairman Mao portraits? Why haven't you got any?" They attacked the mother, her little daughter and teen-age son, and slapped their faces.

They tore down all the pictures, prints and photographs from the walls, tore them up and trampled on them. Splintered frames and scraps of pictures were still scattered all over the floor.

"Where are your Mao Tse-tung writings?" they had yelled.

Happily, the family did have a volume of "selected writings". The hungweipings put it aside and, declaring the rest of the books to be "bad", ordered them to be burned.

Meanwhile, the girls tackled the clothes and crockery. They smashed up the cups and the dishes.

"Cup with dragons—a feudal cup!"

Smash goes the cup on the floor.

"Cup with flowers and rosettes—a bourgeois philistine cup."

Bang goes another cup.

"Where is your Mao Tse-tung bust?" they asked and trampled on the china figurines of a fisherman, a peasant girl and some poets.

The gold-fish bowl was thrown out of the window as a survival of feudalism.

The girls tore into shreds all of the husband's European-style coats and trousers, and the wife's skirts.

"Foreign slaves! Traitors!" they yelled.

In the meantime, the young men went out onto the balcony and broke all the cactus pots as a useless luxury.

In a far corner of the balcony they found a cat.

"Just look at these bourgeois!" cried one of the hungweipings and, grabbing the cat by the tail, smashed its head against the wall. He wanted to throw it out into the yard, but the girls protested:

"Put the carrion in the pantry and lock the door! Let the bourgeois riff-raff breathe in the stink."

The family implored them not to do that, but the hungweipings were not to be moved and put a lock on the door of the pantry to prevent the family from getting rid of the putrid smell. At this point, the teacher-witnesses interfered.

"You shouldn't do that," they urged. "We shall take away their second room and move in the revolutionary family of one of our activists. If the carrion remains in the flat, the new lodgers will also have to live with the stench."

Their line of reasoning had its effect, and the cat went out of the window.

"Have they stolen anything from you?" I asked the mistress of the flat.

"Yes, a few trifles: my husband's fountain pen, our wrist-watches, a pair of spectacles, some writing pads, paper and diaries. But that's nothing. What's worse is that they have confiscated and taken away all of my husband's notes and manuscripts, and all our letters. They said they would set up an inquiry into our crimes."

I saw some broken records on the floor.

"We like Russian songs and have had these records for years," the woman sadly explained. "They broke these over my son's head, for they were furious when they found we had Soviet records. They also looked for Soviet papers and magazines, but we did not have any: my husband had burned everything himself back in 1961."

She told me that when the hungweipings had done with the things, they had set to work on the family, urging them to repudiate the arrested head of the family. But she and her son had refused to do so. They had also refused to denounce his "rotten ideas", or to thank the hungweipings for having "liberated them from the fetters of the old way of life and helping them to turn over a new leaf". The hungweipings had tried to persuade them for about an hour, and had then made them stand with their backs to the wall, asking them: "Are we

waging a good fight against the old ways? Are we doing a good job of spreading Mao Tse-tung thought?"

Getting no answer, they had again set to slapping them in the face, knocking their heads against the wall.

"We stood this as long as we could, hoping that they would go away to their meeting," said the boy. "But they talked it over and decided that five of them would stay behind to 'fight' us. We couldn't stand it any longer and gave in. I told them: 'You are spreading Mao Tse-tung thought very well. You are fighting the bourgeoisie very well.' Then they stopped beating us and went to their meeting. But they warned that they would be back, without saying when. That's why we are not clearing anything away. Let it all lie there!"

"But how did you risk inviting me on top of all that?" I asked.

"Oh, it's all the same to us now," the woman said dejectedly. "We simply wanted you to know what's happening here."

I took leave with a deep sense of sympathy for these unhappy people, who still had many trials and undeserved insults in store for them.

I walked back to my hostel along deserted lanes. The loudspeakers were going full blast, relaying the hungweiping rally at the stadium. The atmosphere hotted up as the hoarse cries of orators mingled with bursts of howling from the audience, and triumphant reports with critical speeches and bouts of quarrelling and scuffling. Spokesmen of the "Mao Tse-tungism" detachment reviled the Cultural Revolution Committee on the slightest pretext. They were now talking of the schoolchildren's services to the mass movement.

"We should give a lead to the combat units of the little forerunners of the revolution!" shrieked the loudspeakers. "We hungweipings are the chief force of the cultural revolution, the vehicles and propagandists of Chairman Mao's thought. The best among us should head the schoolchildren's brigades. We shall lead them forth to carry out revolutionary operations!"

Thunderous applause and a change of orator. A clear, business-like voice began a critical speech.

"Our comrades have been working tirelessly, but have yet to show any significant results. What's wrong? What's hindering us? I'll put it bluntly: it's sabotage of the revolutionary cause! The conservatives have again reared their heads. Comrades, we are being sabotaged by the University administration and the

Cultural Revolution Committee. They have packed it with 40-year-old monarchists!"

The audience set up a roar, a mixture of pros and cons. At last, the speaker went on:

"I'll prove it to you! I'll prove it to all of you! What are the present-day monarchists saying? They're saying that revolutionary operations are a military affair and should be headed by men that know the business. So they have been appointing home-guard commanders to lead the groups. But what do these filthy commanders know?"

Another burst of roaring.

We must be led by men with ample revolutionary experience!" the speaker yelled. "If a man has no mercy for Chairman Mao's enemies and has been of service to the cultural revolution, he may be leader at the age of ten, to say nothing of twenty!"

The loudspeakers exploded in a burst of shouting, moaning and croaking, and I knew that there was fighting in the presidium. The frenzied crowd roared like a wild beast.

"Comrade hungweipings!" someone shrieked in a piercing voice. "Down with all the authorities! Long live the most, most, most revolutionary red authority, our dearly beloved Chairman Mao!"

My head buzzed and I was utterly exhausted. I threw myself on the bed and switched on my transistor radio. Moscow Radio was broadcasting a football commentary. As soon as I heard the commentator's gay and excited voice, I regained confidence in the future. My own country was at peace, and the knowledge of this helped me to calm down.

Another piece of news was that the Pedagogical University had been renamed as the University of Revolutionary Education. True, the new name had yet to be given final approval by the higher authorities, but a sign to that effect had already been pasted over the old board at the entrance. Willy-nilly, I was in daily contact with the hungweipings. I was still able to go out into the city and saw the red guards at their "revolutionary operations". But their activity on the campus had of late considerably slackened. They were finding it hard to fight on two fronts.

For several days now, one could feel that the centre of the "cultural revolution" was moving towards the Soviet Embassy, which I often visited. One day I got a phone call from the

Embassy saying that a group of Soviet tourists—some China specialists I knew among them—were arriving from Moscow. I was glad to go and meet them at the station. Some Embassy officials also came.

The centre of the large square before the new Peking station was usually empty, with a lone policeman on a raised stone platform directing the traffic rather for the sake of order. Pedestrians skirted the square along its edges, and the trolleys also moved along the kerb. This time I saw at once that something was up. People at the station usually hurried along in a business-like way, but now they were all standing still on the pavement. I looked round and saw that three hungweipings had got hold of a youth with a big shock of hair and were rapidly marching him across the square towards the policeman. The pavement running round the square was lined with people staring hard at the procession. I also stopped to watch.

When they came up to the policeman, one of the hungweipings jumped onto the stone platform and gave him a rough push, throwing him off the platform. The policeman did not even try to protest, but stepped obediently aside. The hungweipings pulled the young man onto the platform and flung him to his knees. Two of them twisted back his arms and held him down, while the third placed a foot on the back of his neck and with a slow, measured movement started pounding his face against the platform. A red stain spread out on the stone. The crowd watched on in silence. I shuddered and walked quickly into the station building.

A small group of foreigners who had come to meet the international express stood talking on the platform. Soon the Phonyngyang train pulled in and we met the Moscow tourists, who looked gay and cheerful. Having got the messages they had brought for us from our friends and acquaintances at home and exchanged various items of news, we left them in the charge of the Chinese Foreign Tourists' Agency and the three of us, myself and two Embassy officials, went on to the Embassy.

I asked my companions what was going on at the Embassy, but they told me to wait and see.

I did know that the hungweipings had decided to rename the street where the Soviet Embassy was located. So what of it? It did not make any difference whether the street was called "Anti-revisionist" or not. As we walked slowly towards the Embassy building, we read the headlines of tatzupaos on the walls of buildings and stone fences.

One of my companions had a camera and started photographing the *tatzupaos*. But all at once the deserted sun-scorched street was alive with people. A junior schoolboy, still too young to wear an armband, saw the camera and stood against the wall to cover up the *tatzupao*.

At this point, an elderly man dressed in a good suit of civilian clothes intervened.

"Step aside, let them photograph it! Spreading the ideas of the cultural revolution is a good thing!"

The boy obeyed and moved away.

First I read a long *tatzupao* signed by the pupils of a girls' school, who wanted the street to be renamed. Student *hungweipings* had hung out their own *tatzupaos* in support of the schoolchildren. These were not in the least aggressive, merely saying that they "approved of and supported" the schoolchildren's proposal, which was a "good revolutionary initiative" and a "splendid venture". But when we came to a *tatzupao* signed by the students of Peking Chinese Medical College, we could not help feeling that something more important than a mere demonstration to mark the renaming of the street was about to happen, for the poster called for "bloody vengeance". I took down the final paragraph, and here is what it said:

"Soviet revisionists! Enough! Enough! Enough! Just now we are not taking our revenge, for the hour has not yet struck, but one day we shall wreak full vengeance! When the day comes, we shall skin you alive, pull out your sinews, burn your corpses and scatter your ashes on the winds!" Signed: Liu Chung, Chiang Kai-hsuan, and two other garbled names, Peking Chinese Medical College.

The amazing thing here was not the threat itself, which was, of course, absurd: it was the utter lack of moral principle among its authors, who were soon to become doctors, and their ingratitude for all that the Soviet people had done for China.

When I was returning home that night, having spent the afternoon at the Embassy, I decided to take a look at what was being done towards the coming demonstration.

It was a quiet, sultry night. The street outside the Embassy gates was deserted, except for some schoolchildren picketing at the corners and two local women on duty strolling up and down the street. Barricades of Mao portraits decked with garlands barred the road at three points, and the asphalt was

covered with slogans. While I had been at the Embassy, more *tatzupaos* had been put up.

Water closets were being urgently erected around the Embassy. These, too, displayed slogans: "Long live Chairman Mao!" and "Everything for the sake of the people!" Hundreds and perhaps thousands of people were to stay in the area for hours, and the organisers were showing concern for their needs. The blockade was apparently to last for several days.

Giant picture-posters, about 1.5 by 2 metres, decorated the sides of the buildings. One of these showed a hefty *hungweiping* in rubber shoes raising a foot above a carefully traced-out Soviet Embassy, complete with columns and porticoes. A similar drawing next to the first one showed a plump cheap-print schoolgirl with a Young Pioneer tie poised with a big piece of rock over her head and about to bring it down on the Embassy building, shown here as stripped of its red flag, with cracked columns and crooked façade.

Indeed, the Embassy area was apparently a much more dangerous place to be in than the University, the *hungweiping* headquarters. I was even surprised at the Embassy people, who faced the possibility of a blockade quite coolly. A blockade, I was perfectly sure, was now inevitable.

But it started a day later than I had expected, on the night of Monday, August 29. The telephone had not been cut off, and I phoned in several times from my hostel.

They told me that the loudspeakers were booming and they were unable to leave the premises. This went on for days. The dining-room had to close down because food supplies had been cut off. One day I had a call from the wife of a *Pravda* correspondent, who asked me to buy some milk for her year-old son. She did not seem to realise that the problem was not buying the milk, but getting it to the Embassy.

Our German friends also suffered at the hands of the *hungweipings* during that first blockade. The *hungweipings* detained them at the gates of the Soviet Embassy, where they were going to see a film, made them leave their car, dragged them to a neighbouring school, and questioned them for five hours, wanting to know whether they were Soviet, and beating and kicking them for good measure. A GDR Embassy official I knew told me later that he had been on duty that night and had had to intervene to rescue his fellow-countrymen.

As soon as the blockade was lifted, I went over to the Embassy. "Anti-revisionist Street" was littered with paper; the thousands had left their traces everywhere.

"Down with the Soviet revisionists!" cried a schoolboy at the corner and threw a stone at me. As I walked along the street, I could also hear similar shouts coming from the yards I passed, whereas before the blockade people in the street, both children and grown-ups, had always given us a friendly greeting in Russian.

The August blockade was a grave though futile provocation, but the Maoists subsequently surpassed themselves: they mounted their outrages on an even larger scale during the 1966 November holidays and in January and February 1967.

IX. THE HUNGWEIPING REIGN

SEPTEMBER SWING. A PEKING AMERICAN. HUNGWEIPING FEUDS. RAIDS ON THE PROVINCES. THE WAY TO BECOME A HUNGWEIPING. MAO IN UNIFORM. CHINESE MYTHS

September 1966 comes back to me as a time of change in hungweiping attitudes rather than the start of another calendar season. Regular rallies in Tien An Men Square, sanctified by Mao's personal appearances, added fuel to the hungweipings' fire. The numerous festive speeches excited the young thugs, goading them on to fresh "deeds". And then suddenly at one of these rallies, Lin Piao, Mao Tse-tung's "most loyal associate", came out with some criticism of the hungweipings' "revolutionary practices".

That day the rally was on a truly grand scale. The whole of the city transport and its fleet of trucks had been assigned to carrying hungweipings into the city centre. Still, these were not enough, so that most of the University's "red guards" set off on foot early in the morning, making up a mammoth column several blocks long.

When they left and the University quietened down, I went back to my studies. The stock of books I had got from the library as a reserve two days before the "working commission" was toppled and the library taken over by the hungweipings was gradually running out.

In the evening I went out into the city, and near Hsisa, a lively shopping centre, ran across some of our Soviet students and trainees from other universities. We walked down the unusually deserted thoroughfare, dropping in for supper at a restaurant in the Hsitan Arcades, recently converted into a dining-room for the "revolutionary masses" with tightly controlled portioning-out of food.

By the time we finished our food and came out into the street, night had fallen. The street swarmed with hungweipings. The rally in Tien An Men had broken up, and the hungweipings—almost a million of them—were returning home. A string of wildly hooting busses, jam-packed with the lucky ones, crawled along the middle of the road. We mingled with the crowd streaming West, towards the university suburb. The people around us seemed listless and said very little, dropping an occasional meaningless remark. I gathered, however, that that day Lin Piao had said something of importance.

Next morning the University again bubbled with life. The hungweipings stayed on the campus and took to rallying at the stadium. This lasted for several days, with short breaks for meals. The hungweipings were absorbing Lin Piao's instructions issued in Tien An Men.

The Marshal had told them in solemn, high-flown terms that in their "cultural revolution" they had been carried away by "trifles" and had been following "roundabout ways" by persecuting shopkeepers, householders letting flats, and barbers, whereas the chief enemies were those who had "the power within the Party" and followed "the capitalist way".

The rank-and-file speakers at the stadium naturally gave their own reading to Lin Piao's words and clamoured for a "fight against the Party functionaries". One of them yelled, for instance:

"Check up on all the Party members at the University who have not yet been convicted! Probe the extent of their involvement in the 'black reign'! Devote particular attention to the crimes of the professors against Mao Tse-tung thought!"

The others echoed this, with minor variations, and their voices, carried by the loudspeakers, boomed along the corridors and the park lanes.

Lin Piao's speech served to take the edge off the outrages in the city streets, but sparked off a fresh drive against CPC members. No Party member now was above suspicion.

The national bourgeoisie, on the other hand, was not to be touched. In his widely circulated speech before the hungweipings, Premier of the State Council Chou En-lai had said so in plain words, turning down the hungweipings' demand that the Chinese capitalists should be deprived of their fixed 5-per cent interest on profits. The government was shielding these capitalists, the men who had worked on democratic parties, and also the Chinese repatriates, usually of bourgeois origin. In other

words, I thought at the time, the Mao group was doing its best to purge its young followers of every "socialist survival", goading them on to destroy the best and most militant section of the Party, the chief target of the essentially anti-popular and counter-revolutionary "cultural revolution".

The debate over Lin Piao's speech and the subsequent string of directives from the "Group for the Affairs of the Cultural Revolution under the CC" and the State Council did not go off very smoothly, and there was a great deal of muddle and confusion.

An editorial in *Jenmin jihpao* on September 3, entitled "In Fighting Use Words, Not Force", caused the worst mix-up. It condemned the use of brute force against dissenters and wanted them "re-educated" by persuasion. That was an unusual appeal, to say the least, considering that for a fortnight Peking had been living under a real reign of terror. I thought that the Mao group was perhaps casting about for an alibi so as to prove that the recent developments were none of its doing and to put all the blame on the "zeal and unrestraint" of the young, whom they had in fact sent into action.

The paper called on the hungweipings to unite in a nationwide "revolutionary organisation".

But the very attitude towards the *Jenmin jihpao* editorial, which was being circulated at the University as an official document, showed up the bitter rivalries within the movement. The University's "cultural revolution committee" and its "Ching-kangshan" supporters were very enthusiastic about the editorial, copying it out in large characters onto giant boards, and pinning it up as printed leaflets on trees and lamp-posts. The "Maotsetungists", on the other hand, opposed the editorial. After nightfall, they would cross out the latest leaflets in black ink, and write in their own slogans alongside the old headlines: "We shall not abandon our revolutionary action!" and "Mao Tse-tung teaches us: 'Revolution is no crime, rebellion is justified!'"

At last the "Maotsetungists" came out into the open with their own leaflets and posters. These said: "This is a warning to all the scoundrels and dirty scum of the country! We shall never stop using force against force in our fighting! There has been some talk about fighting with words, and many have taken this to mean an amnesty. We won't have that! We shall use words to fight the vanquished. As for you, freaks and monsters, scoundrels and dirty scum, this is our final warning! 'Revolution is no crime, rebellion is justified!' Long live

revolutionary operations! Long live the great proletarian cultural revolution!"

Many hungweipings refused to go out harvesting into the countryside on the plea that the "riff-raff in the capital" had yet to be "finished off". They now took to staging their raids at night.

The bungweipings did not confine themselves to raids on the flats of "freaks and monsters", but issued an ultimatum to the effect that everyone living on the campus should destroy within three days any harmful books he may have. Teachers and students would bring them over and pile them up on a cart which made regular trips between the University and a scrap-paper yard. But these books were mostly quite harmless, for the owners of any foreign, especially Soviet, books were simply afraid to show them in public and preferred to burn them in their rooms behind closed doors.

The night before the ultimatum ran out, there was a flickering light in many windows on the campus, giving the place a kind of festive look, because every teacher at the University had some books of his own, and some of the professors even had their own libraries. The University library was still intact, but no Chinese student was allowed to use it. Some hungweipings were now living in the library building, having listed all the books, except Mao's writings, in a "closed fund".

On my trip across the country I had made the acquaintance of many foreign students taking courses in China. Their life in the country was pretty dull and lonely, and all of them had a keen sense of being artificially isolated from the Chinese students and the people in general.

As a result, we foreigners were always friendly with each other, and liked to meet and talk about the goings on around us.

I sometimes went to see Howard N. Adam, an American I had met on my trip across the country. A tall, lanky man with light hair and grey-blue eyes, he stood out vividly among the Chinese and never failed to excite their curiosity on our tour of the provinces. He was perfectly erect and walked in long, vigorous military strides, swinging his long arms as he went. He spoke Chinese with a guttural accent, but was very fluent.

Howard was a Texan and had done long service abroad with the US army. During the Second World War he had fought in the Philippines, had gone back for a short time to civilian life, and had then rejoined the army to fight in Korea. There he had

been taken prisoner, had made two unsuccessful attempts to escape, and had then decided to stay on in China, where he had married a Chinese girl. At our first meeting he warned me that he shared the Peking platform and was a "true Marxist-Leninist". He was taking a special course in "Mao Tse-tung thought" at the People's University of Peking.

While differing on many essential points, we took to each other and never argued. Howard had become used to his new surrounding, but the "cultural revolution" had come as a shock to him, and there were many things he could not justify.

"I don't like to see them burning the books," he admitted. "Book-burning has always been a nasty business. Hitler used to burn books in Europe. It's a bad omen."

I was surprised to find his Peking flat bare and cheerless. It turned out that Howard's wife was afraid of the bungweipings. He had tried to reassure her by saying that foreigners were not being touched, but anyway, for the sake of peace in the family he had had to destroy all his Soviet books and papers, take off the pictures, and put away the goldfish bowl and all the other knick-knacks. He had then covered the walls with Mao sayings, so putting his wife's mind at ease.

One could see her point very well: when I first came to visit them, the hungweipings had just sacked a flat on the floor below.

At the homes of foreigners I would sometimes meet their Chinese friends. While it was very dangerous for Chinese to meet Soviet people, some of them still risked keeping up a cautious acquaintance with other foreigners. I found these occasional meetings particularly interesting, since I had very few other opportunities to talk to Chinese informally. I once went to see Howard and found a Chinese girl literally sitting on a travelling bag in his room. She looked up at me with the indifferent expression people often have after some grave and sudden misfortune. It turned out that she was from a sacked flat and was hiding from the bungweipings. She took me for an American. Those were the days when everyone was busily debating the *Jenmin jihpao* editorial about using words instead of force in the fighting. So I said that the violence was apparently about to stop and that things would soon be back to normal.

"No," said the girl. "They go in for their 'revolutionary operations' at night and don't tell anyone about them. It's now become even worse. Take me, I have to hide at my foreign neighbours'."

"Why don't you complain to the local authorities?" I asked. "Oh no! The hungweipings said they'd kill me if anyone found out about the raid. I want to slip away and go back to Tsinan, my native town. But I don't know whether I'll find it easier over there."

"But who are you and why are they persecuting you?" I asked.

"I'm of bourgeois origin," she explained. "After Liberation, up until recently, my father was a supply-and-equipment officer with a wage of about 50 yuans. He earned another 70 yuans a month letting rooms in his house. My three sisters and I were students. But when the 'cultural revolution' broke out, the hungweipings said that since my father let rooms he was a 'bloodsucking exploiter'; they imprisoned the old man, confiscated all our property, and began to fight us, members of his family."

A funny thing, I thought. The Chinese government was protecting the big capitalists but was prepared to see the smaller fry hunted down.

By then, the hungweiping movement had spread to the plants and factories. It was at Howard's place that I heard a Chinese girl, his next-door neighbour, tell about the state of affairs at the First Textile Mill. Hers was a very frank account, for she fancied herself among the victors.

"My fiancé, who works at the textile mill, is at the headquarters of their new hungweiping detachment. They've had it for a week now, and have made several attempts to drive out the old director and the old, black Party Committee, but many of the older workers are not Mao-conscious, they don't understand Mao Tse-tung thought. It's because they're old, you see," she explained. "The non-Mao-conscious workers have been backing the management and the Party Committee, so that the factory grounds have been divided about half-half. Some shops are in the hands of the hungweipings, while others are still under the former Party Committee, which is also still in control of the management. But never mind, they won't last long. The hungweipings are sure to win out. My fiancé has now become a chief! He now has a room to himself!"

She was very pleased with the "cultural revolution" and had quickly mastered the hungweiping jargon. She was very happy about her fiancé's sudden rise to the top, and sincerely resented the fact that some "low-conscious" workers resisted "Chairman Mao thought".

"Both parties have sent deputations to the new Peking City Committee," she continued, "but there they were told that the Party was going to follow the line of the masses. It'll be as the masses say! But what can the masses say while there are so many low-conscious workers among them, who back the Party Committee? So it came to bloodshed. There was fighting at the factory, right there in the shops. Then the soldiers came and took over. They have forbidden the use of any force and say one has to do the fighting with words. But how's one to make the hardened ones change their mind? Still, my fiancé and I myself, we're sure the hungweipings will eventually gain the upper hand."

I had never been to a Peking factory during the "cultural revolution", but the hungweipings themselves would often tell about the infighting among the workers, whom the Maoists were trying to get at each other's throats so as to do away with the Party organs. In the course of the fighting, people were being killed and production was naturally cut back, for it often happened that some of the factory shops would continue under the Party Committee and the management, while the rest would fall to the "revolutionaries", who were subsequently termed tsao-fans, "the rebels". The University hungweipings were always keen to back them and help them to put down the old workers, the Party men and the specialists.

Later, when I was leaving for home, I dropped in at Howard's to say goodbye. They were sending me out two months before my term ran out, and Howard said he was sorry.

"I think this is just the right time for me to leave," I said. "This place is getting to be dangerous: the hungweipings are bound to get on to the foreigners."

I presented Howard with my unredeemed vouchers for cotton fabric, which the Office had given me in September, and this pleased his wife.

"We have many relatives with big families," she said as she unfolded the vouchers. "They never have enough fabric for their clothes. Wool and synthetic fabric are too expensive and, besides, it's dangerous to wear such expensive stuff, for they could seize you for leading a bourgeois way of life!"

She was right, too.

"Life in China is getting worse every year, it's stifling," she complained. "There was a time when I didn't want to go to the USA, my husband's homeland, but if he decides to go now, I shall go too."

"I'll think about it," said Howard. "I do have an opportunity to go back to America. My parents are out there. The only thing is that my younger brother has disavowed me—he's an anti-Communist. We'll wait and see."

Back in July the "working commission" had still dared to detain "Leftists" and to denounce and disgrace them from the public rostrum, whereas in September no one would risk touching the hungweiping extremists any longer. They were now on the offensive. That month the "Maotsetungists" made two attempts to topple the University's "cultural revolution" committee, and it was only the backing of the "Chingkangshan" detachment that helped the new administration to keep afloat.

"Chingkangshan" rallies were particularly violent, because within that detachment itself there was an extremist minority styling itself "revolutionary". Its members treated debate within the detachment as an occasion for attacking their own leadership, the detachment headquarters, and demanding its re-election. "Delegations" from the "Maotsetungism" detachment would always come over to attend these vociferous and scrappy affairs and give their active support to the "revolutionary minority". Their support went beyond mere heckling and speeches against their opponents: they would often join in the fistcuffs. The "Maotsetungists" bluntly accused the "Chingkangshan" headquarters of being counter-revolutionary, but expressed the hope that the rank-and-file "Chingkangshan" hungweipings would "soon see the light". They themselves, they claimed, were the only revolutionaries.

The mutual-destruction machine the Maoists had built into Chinese society was now going at a speed of about one revolution per month: once a month the University went through a change of political leadership. Up on top, in the upper echelons, the situation was, of course, more complicated.

All the vanquished, whoever they were, were always labelled counter-revolutionaries. Once on top, the victors would immediately split up into warring factions: a majority would follow the new leadership, while a splinter group would come out against it, declare it counter-revolutionary, and eventually bring it down. The pattern appeared to be perpetual.

Thus, at the Peking Pedagogical University the "revolutionaries" first rose up on June 3 and, on approval from the top, overthrew the Party Committee led by Cheng, which had been in power from 1962. After that, most of them rallied round the

CC's "working group" and ran the University, while a fresh "Leftist" minority broke away from the "group" and their former fellow-fighters, and toppled the "group" after Chiang Ching's speech in July.

The July "Leftists" elected a "cultural revolution" committee, which headed the University's third administration and kept head above water through August. Now there emerged two hungweiping detachments, one of these taking an extreme stand. The extremists attacked the administration of the old "Leftists". The September 3 anti-violence editorial in *Jenmin jihpao*, whatever the hypocritical reasons behind it, and the nation-wide harvesting campaign helped the "cultural revolution" committee to pursue its line and enabled it to hold out for another month: it did not fall until October.

It was only natural that the ceaseless chopping and changing among the local authorities killed the hungweipings' respect for all authority. Anarchism among them reigned supreme, so that some of their detachments even sought to defy Mao himself. The "cultural revolution" committee of Peking University, for instance, laid claim to being just short of China's supreme authority.

In September, the hungweipings staged raids into all of the country's major provinces. The Pedagogical University sent out its own, over one hundred-strong "fighting unit" to the south to "spread the cultural revolution". The hungweipings arrived at the station, occupied as many seats as they wanted on the train they chose, and warned the "idlers" who had the tickets for these seats that any "saboteurs of the cultural revolution" who dared claim their seats would be ejected from the moving train.

A fortnight later, the "fighting unit" returned covered with "glory", and the University gave it a drumbeat welcome. Everyone came to hear their reports, and the proceedings were relayed over the loudspeakers. A girl-activist told the gathering in a ringing voice:

"Wherever we went, we followed Comrade Lin Piao's instructions and started out by disbanding and smashing up the Party committees."

The "fighting unit" had been to Hofei, Changsha and Kweilin. The fighting, they admitted, had been very fierce and everywhere their task had proved to be more difficult than they had expected. In Hofei, for instance, they had got off at the station, formed a column, and made for the City Party

Committee and the Anhwei CPC Provincial Committee. They had occupied the City Committee building and had taken some prisoners, but many of its functionaries had managed to escape and had rallied the local workers.

The "duped masses", the speaker went on, had come out in defence of the "black Party Committee" and had ousted the hungweipings from the building they had occupied. There had been some killed and wounded on both sides.

While Hofei had on the whole been a relative success, in Changsha "Mao Tse-tung's envoys" had suffered a total defeat. A bitter passage in their report said that the local Party Committee had "prepared in advance a crowd of the duped masses", who blocked the hungweipings' way from the station. They had been unable to break through into the square, to say nothing of the city, and had been obliged to go back within a few hours.

But in Kweilin, the report said, they had "triumphantly" routed the provincial Party Committee. On the whole, twelve hungweipings from the fighting unit had not come back from the provinces: they had "died heroic deaths for the sake of Mao Tse-tung thought" in the course of the attacks on the Party committees. Many others had been wounded and were patching up their wounds at the dispensary.

Once I had to wait for the doctor together with two girls, one of whom was just back from the South. They were talking about Mao's numerous enemies within the Party and their stubborn resistance.

"Can't they realise that Chairman Mao will defeat everyone?" one of them wondered.

"Changsha was worst of all, we couldn't do anything there. But no matter, we'll be back yet!"

"D'you mean you're going back?" the other girl asked.

"When we were on our way there, we thought they'd be glad to have us. I didn't know that there were people who would dare to come out openly against Mao Tse-tung thought."

The other girl told her the news about the schoolchildren taking part in the movement, about their ultimatums, and about the number of Mao portraits and sayings you had to have in your room under the "new order".

"What kind have you bought?" asked the newly returned girl.

"I've taken three medium-sized ones, one for each wall without a window. I'd also have liked to put up a small saying over the bed, but I haven't been able to get one."

"Yes, indeed, they're snapped up at once, you can never get a small one. And I've dropped behind: haven't bought a single one yet. Too busy."

"Why, of course, you've only just come."

"I'll go and get some this very day, otherwise I feel ashamed."

"Fighting units" were also returning from other areas. They had been to the North-East (units from the Pedagogical University, for instance—to Tsilin) and to the North-West. They maintained contacts with their supporters in the localities, even where they failed to "vanquish" the local Party organs at the first go. Special stands were erected on the campus to carry reports from the localities, which sometimes appeared as tatzupaos, but most frequently as printed broadsheets with photographs showing tortured men, mutilated bodies, and sheds with hooks, nooses, and other instruments of torture. Anhwei, Kansu, Sian, Chungking, Fukien and other places had their own stands, which put one in mind of civil-war communiqués.

The hungweiping broadsheets denounced the "whiteguard terrorism" of the local Party organs. I can still recall a set of horror photographs under the caption of "Seventy Days of Whiteguard Terrorism in Sian", where, the leaflets said, hungweiping raiders had been killed by the score.

In September, one could still read in Peking various appeals and addresses by the local authorities telling of hungweiping outrages against Party functionaries and debunking hungweiping propaganda. Both parties so hotly accused each other of lying that it was hard to understand what was going on.

I could not help feeling there was some truth in the photographs showing men with their ears cut off or their eyes gouged out, or piles of whips seized from the hungweipings. I also had to believe the hungweipings' own photographs showing their defeated fighters, battered and bloody, with broken arms, legs and heads: after all, not all of those they attacked would go like lambs to the slaughter. Where the hungweipings were driven out of a town it was only after a bloody battle. The reports claimed vast losses—hundreds and thousands, but these horrifying figures were not as convincing, for either side sought to accuse the other of cruelty so as to justify its own "retaliatory measures of self-defence".

The hungweipings countered the unexpected resistance in the localities to the waves of the "cultural revolution" spreading out from the capital with this slogan: "Let us launch

a people's war against the enemies of the cultural revolution!" Their tatzupaos called on all the "revolutionary forces" to unite in one organisation in the spirit of "Mao Tse-tung's teaching on the people's war", "rally the broad masses of workers and peasants to revolt", and deal with any opponents without mercy, in a ruthless military way. "Let us use people's warfare methods to clear the country of all the rascals, parasites and class enemies! Let us establish Mao Tse-tung thought on a nation-wide scale for ever!"

It was the hungweipings of Peking University who first suggested another "people's war".

On their return to Peking, hungweiping fighting units and detachments would stage show trials over various provincial Party committees. These would often last all night and would be attended by hungweipings from all over the city. In September, to my knowledge, trials of that kind were staged over the provincial committees of Anhwei, Fukien, Kansu and Shensi.

A trial of that kind, in fact, meant that the hungweipings' first onslaught had been repulsed and that the provincial committee had yet to be toppled. Some "fighting unit" usually handled the trial proceedings.

The charges against the Anhwei Provincial Committee of the CPC were posted up on a board at the entrance to Peking University three days before the trial, and I remember them very well. The Anhwei Committee, the poster said, had had "the gull" to fight "Chairman Mao's envoys" and even to "oust" them "at the cost of bloodshed". Having repulsed the attack of the Peking hungweipings, the Committee had realised the danger and was doing its best to suppress the local movement. The poster accused the Committee of "coming out against the cultural revolution", fighting against Mao Tse-tung "thought", refusing to "bow its head before the revolutionary masses and Chairman Mao's envoys", of being "monarchist" and of backing the "counter-revolutionary bourgeois line within the Party". The hungweiping term "monarchist" meant refusal by Party organisations and functionaries to hand over their powers to the hungweipings, and "counter-revolutionary bourgeois line" meant support for the former Party leadership, Chairman of the Republic, Liu Shao-chi, in particular. The word "bourgeois" was hungweiping for hostility to Chairman Mao.

These trials were seen as important political events and were often attended by members of the "Group for the Affairs of the

Cultural Revolution" under the CC and Mao's close associates.

So, in September 1966, the whole of Chinese life centred on the hungweipings. It was hard to become a hungweiping, and most of the students could never join.

It was only the children of workers and peasants—non-Party and non-Komsomol young people—who were free to join, and also children of "revolutionary Party functionaries", that is, men who supported the "cultural revolution". According to the hungweipings themselves, these made up about 40 per cent of all the students, while the rest were of "hostile class origin" and were labelled as petty bourgeois (a majority), bourgeois, and children of regular Party functionaries (about 15 per cent).

Children of workers and peasants who had a past to live down, that is, those who had been members of the CPC or the Komsomol, and also young people of petty-bourgeois origin and children of Party functionaries (where they were prepared to renounce their parents) could become "sympathisers".

My futao Ma was trying hard to join the hungweipings. We had come back from our tour of the country when their detachments had already been set up and enrollment was being controlled. There were two points in his favour: he was a worker's son and, as a teacher of second-year students, had always sided with the extreme Leftists. But Ma also had a grave defect: he was a Party member and, moreover, had an important assignment from the "black Party Committee", chaperoning me, a "Soviet revisionist".

Upon our return in August, Ma had at once joined the "sympathisers" and had taken an active part in the "revolt" at the Philological Department, where the "cultural revolution" had been making least headway. Here he had soon performed some "services for the revolution" (by helping to "expose" Professor Kuo, his own teacher, and several elected Party men at the Department), so he now had good reason to seek admission to the hungweipings.

But if he did, he would be running a risk, for a rejection would mean a bad political failure. Still, he decided to take a chance and handed in his application. They asked him a question, which he had to answer in public, at a meeting of the detachment in a week's time. He spent the week in nervous preparation, hardly ever leaving his room, using up reams of paper and tearing up what he wrote. He sat huddled up in a corner with his back turned to me, as if he was afraid that I

would try to read the scribbled pages. On the decisive day he left early and came back very late with a solemn and triumphant look on his face, wearing a red band of the "Maotse-tungism" detachment.

"Congratulations," I said. "How was the meeting?"

"Everything went off smoothly," he replied. "My comrades asked me one question: 'Why have you, a young man of the Mao Tse-tung epoch, chosen ancient feudal culture and literature as your line of study?' I told them that from the very beginning Mao Tse-tung thought was what I valued most in the world, and that I had gone in for ancient feudal culture so as to criticise it from the standpoint of Mao Tse-tung thought. I said I had wanted to become a specialist so as to expose all of Chairman Mao's enemies who were using the study of ancient literature as a screen."

"But I thought you appreciated literature," I could not help saying. "Surely you didn't enter the University for those reasons! And the hungweipings have been destroying books and closing down bookshops."

"I spoke of my supreme goals, the goals I am now striving for."

Ma joined the hungweipings in the most trying period: by the end of September, admission procedures were relaxed, for the hungweipings had become uneasy about being in a "revolutionary minority". From then on, their detachments swelled.

The hungweiping reign had its own laws. Everyone now had to display one's "revolutionary" enthusiasm. The students were emboldened to insult any passers-by, to say nothing of convicts with white breast-plates. They would now and again even stop me in the city streets and make an impudent scrutiny of my University badge. Since the students were the shock force of the mass movement, the student badge gave me full freedom of movement all over the city.

At the Pedagogical University things were different: here they knew me by sight. On the one hand, I was an object of unconcealed curiosity, something of a rare animal; everyone, even the most inveterate Maoists, would have liked to have a talk with a Soviet citizen so as to get some first-hand information about his views and attitudes.

On the other hand, however, there was a generous display of hatred. Whenever I passed, heads would be pointedly turned away, but that was something one soon got used to. It was, of

course, bad enough to have people shunning one like a leper, but active hostility was even worse. Whenever the "revolutionaries" saw me, they would spit with contempt, and then one day they had the audacity to come up to me one by one and spit under my feet.

I could think of nothing better than to ask for Ma's advice. He was proud of his involvement with the hungweipings and brought up my case for discussion in his detachment. A few days later he told me that the hungweipings had decided to leave me alone. Their decision proved to be effective, and there was no more spitting throughout the rest of my stay at the University. That September they would only harass me on my way to the Soviet Embassy, and then only as I walked up the short lane to the Embassy gates.

But even when the "cultural revolution" was at its worst, I felt that many Chinese were still very friendly. One incident struck me in particular. A group of Soviet trainees and myself were travelling in a crowded bus, chatting among ourselves in gay and excited voices, for it was not often that we met. Suddenly I heard someone sobbing behind me and turned to see an old Chinese woman wiping away the tears from her face. It turned out that she had once lived in the Soviet Union, and had later worked with Soviet specialists in China on many occasions.

"You've reminded me of the old days," she told me in a low voice. "Just look at what's happening here now! One can't help crying."

In September I would often run across Wang, the former Deputy-Chief of the Foreign Students' Office, whose arrest I had witnessed back in June. He would now walk in silence along the University lanes, shunned by one and all. Once straight and trim, like the military man he had been, he had drooped and bunched in the few months of the "cultural revolution"; humiliation and malnutrition had turned his face grey and his eyes dull, and he had a cough, for the beatings had undermined his health. I was the only one to say hello to him, as if nothing had happened, and I think he was moved.

Wang had been brought up before the stadium crowd and made to stay on the platform for three days and nights. They kept beating him and made him bow down his head; he was humble and aloof, and so escaped a worse lot. His one-time chief, head of the Office Chao, was the only person who dared talk to him in a friendly way. She had also been dismissed, and would now be seen in the Office corridors very rarely. They

had been less tough on her, possibly because she had fainted the very first time they had brought her out on the platform and had had to be taken to hospital with a heart attack. Back in July the "working commission" had managed to relieve the two of them of their disgrace breast-plates, but they had yet to be fully exonerated. Their lot hung in the balance: "Maotsetungist" extremists were hankering after their blood, but for the time being they were in a minority, while the "cultural revolution" committee dealt only with those whose conviction was beyond doubt.

The "revolutionaries" made a point of showing that the convicts were not human. Whenever the latter came to get their food, they would drive this home with insults (as I once saw for myself). There was a comprehensive, well-thought-out system of activities for all convicts, which kept them busy all day. And whenever there was a gap for any reason, they would be formed into workteams.

All the accused were first brought up before disgrace rallies at the stadium, where they were tried, beaten and tormented. After that they would be involved in various regular activities: "shows", "operas" and "processions".

I have already described how people were "led about" the University. In August, the hungweipings took to chasing them about the city streets, while the most prominent convicts, the "black bandits"—mostly prominent Party functionaries—were driven around the city in confiscated trucks for more people to see. The trucks would be decked out in slogans and placards and packed with yelling hungweipings, and the convict would be placed in front, near the driver's cab, with arms twisted behind his back. They would knock him on the back of the head to make him "bow down before the masses", sometimes making him hold up a placard listing his "crimes against the cultural revolution".

"Shows" were the most popular. The convicts were lined up in a lane or at the stadium for anyone to see. Hungweipings would come to exchange "cultural-revolution experience" and file past the convicts, while local activists specially appointed by the University's "cultural revolution" committee would show them around. They would poke at the convicts with their pointers and relate their "crimes" and biographies. Guards would walk up and down behind the men "on show" to see that none of them tried to hold up his head. To ram home the point, they would sometimes make the convicts chant an account of their own "crimes".

In the evenings, the hungweipings staged "operas" on a special rostrum near the student dining-room. Here, the convicts were brought forward before the local hungweipings. The master of ceremonies would ask them whether over the past few days they had learned or come to realise anything new owing to the hungweipings' charity in "protecting their curs' lives from the masses' wrath". The convicts had to speak up one by one, loudly reeling off the Mao quotations they had learned, and atone for their former actions, which had cut across Mao "thought". If a convict's answer did not suit the gathering, he could well be beaten unconscious and his best hope would be to end up in hospital. The raging mob, which had been used to do violence with impunity, spelled death for the men on the rostrum, so that they would shriek out their lines at the top of their voice. But even when no one was killed, the "opera" victims would always be abused, spat at, kicked and knocked about, and stones would be hurled at them from the back rows.

At first the convicts were kept in an old barrack left over from the construction-site period, where the only furniture was a few ping-pong tables. Later, they were allowed to go home, to their own flats, into which other families had also moved. A poster was hung out in the lanes saying that leniency of that kind should not be allowed to do harm to the "cultural revolution" and that any "revolutionary comrade" could "fight" the convicts in their own homes at any hour of the day and night. There was no lack of those who liked to torment people, and night visits to the homes of convicts by a score of hungweipings, with beatings and interrogations, became commonplace.

The "cultural revolution" violence tended to corrupt those involved, the young boys and girls in particular.

Across the way from the Pedagogical University there was a secondary school, where the students had once had their training. The schoolchildren accused their director of being involved with the "black band": he was dragged out and, at the very first meeting, trampled to death.

The local hungweipings put up two notice boards outside the gates to express their views of the matter. The "Maotsetungists" had used red paint: "We welcome the courage and valour of the young heroes of the cultural revolution! Death to the black bandits! Don't spare Chairman Mao's enemies!" I did not read on: they were obviously in raptures.

The "Chingkangshan" detachment took a different stand. Its address said: "Young forerunners of the cultural revolution!"

tion! You have finished off your enemy at one blow! Whom are you going to fight now? The black bandit is dead, he's got off scot free! You should have kept him alive, dragged him out to be disgraced every day, so as to have the masses and yourselves learn from his negative example. You have been too hasty, whereas the great cultural revolution is a serious business, a cause of world-wide importance."

Soon afterwards, all the schoolchildren were assembled for a rally in front of the library. They stood in orderly ranks, by form and age group, and the hungweipings ran the meeting from a rostrum decorated with a giant Mao portrait. They had failed to work out a common platform, and were now standing apart in two hostile groups, the "Chingkangshanists" and the "Maotsetungists". The meeting lasted nearly all day and ended in a scuffle.

No one told the schoolchildren, however, that by murdering a man they had committed a crime.

After the meeting, the "revolutionised" schoolchildren went out into the streets just outside the University grounds and took to catching passing cyclists. Most of China's industrial and office workers cycle to work, for that is cheaper and more convenient than using the packed public vehicles. As they cycled home that evening, the children stood across the road, joined hands and would not let them pass. Where anyone refused to obey, they would threaten to damage their bicycles by shoving sticks in their wheels. The cyclists did not like to stop, and would grumble and swear. The hungweipings wanted them to explain why they did not have any Mao portrait or quotation on their bicycles. That day there were no beatings, but three days later, the schoolchildren's pickets were reinforced with grown-up hungweipings, who would beat up the obstinate ones by way of persuasion. It then turned out that some "evildoers" had fixed Chairman Mao's portrait on the right-hand side of the handle-bars, whereas all things revolutionary, the hungweipings maintained, had to be on the left-hand side. They would give the culprits a savage beating, without so much as taking the trouble to hear out their explanations.

The workers who were being pushed off their bicycles swore indignantly.

"You must be conscientious!" yelled the schoolchildren. "Comply with the orders of the cultural revolution! Display your loyalty to Chairman Mao!"

Threats alternated with persuasion:

"Politics is the most important thing! Politics comes first!"

One day I was walking past the University dwelling blocks. The yard was empty but for a few children: all the grown-ups had gone to the stadium for another "trial", and I could now hear the roaring of the crowd. The children were chasing a scrawny kitten and got hold of it right under my feet. A boy caught it by the tail and, with a cry of "Down with the black bandits! Death! Death!", smashed its head against the corner of a building. The children were all very young—all of pre-school age. They hung the dead kitten up by the tail on a sickly poplar shoot and stood in a circle around it, while a very small girl whipped the thing with a twig.

Now and again they sang out:

"Long live Chairman Mao!"

I squatted by their side and asked them what kind of game they were playing.

"We're trying a cat," said the girl.

"Why have you killed it?"

"The cat was a bourgeois element! Its owners were exposed and ferreted out long ago."

As we talked, the crowd at the stadium kept roaring and the loudspeakers rasped and screeched.

"But who's going to catch mice?"

"We haven't got any mice," the girl replied. "We want to play at trials!"

The children shouted and threw stones at the dead body, just as I had seen students throw stones at live convicts. The kids were merely mimicking their elders.

The top leaders made a point of inspiring the hungweipings. Mao Tse-tung himself reviewed hungweiping parades in Tien An Men Square. One day, an Office employee invited me to watch the ceremony on television.

All the "unlucky" ones, those who were on duty and had to stay behind, crowded round the TV set on our floor. The government stand was the only thing we were shown for more than two hours. Sometimes, indeed, the operator would focus his camera on the audience, and then we saw the ecstatically yelling hungweipings, with twisted lips, tousled hair and waving arms. Everyone was going wild, especially the girls: they joined hands and jumped up and down in the great crush to catch a glimpse of Chairman Mao. The crowd was about a million strong, so that even over the TV its delirious, inarticulate roar was deafening.

The calm, business-like atmosphere on the rostrum was in sharp contrast to the ravings of the mob. Mao Tse-tung stood in the centre with a blank, motionless, mask-like face, and a young woman in white (a nurse or a doctor) stood behind him. No one came up to him or bothered him with any questions. Lin Piao stood in a group of military men, to the right of Mao, and greeted the hungweipings with upraised arm and vacuous smile. Chou En-lai stood on Mao's left with a grave look on his face. He attended to a stream of men in army uniform and hungweipings with red armbands: he shook hands, issued orders, heard out reports, and was in effect so busy that he was not even facing the crowd. Once or twice he went up to Lin Piao to talk something over with him. There were many other leaders on the rostrum, but the TV cameramen showed very little of them, focussing on the big three.

The cameras kept showing Mao Tse-tung from various angles, while the announcer gushed over with eulogies. The Office employees around spoke in excited tones:

"Chairman Mao is in a green army uniform! He's never worn it before, has he?"

"Chairman Mao has never worn an army uniform before! This is very meaningful."

"The Party has betrayed Chairman Mao, so he's taken off his Party uniform," said a hungweiping on duty. "He's now put on an army uniform, for the army is loyal to his ideas."

"That's true! That's very true!" the others agreed.

The whole of Peking was soon agreed that Mao had changed his clothes for a very good purpose: he meant to make it plain that the Party was a hostile body, and that he was spearheading the "cultural revolution" against it, against the enemies ensconced within it. The army uniform was meant to be a reminder that the bayonet, Mao's own loyal army, was in the wings, and that if it came to the crunch, Marshal Lin would give it the nod to go into action.

From the very start of the movement, the "young revolutionaries" maintained that "spreading the experience of the cultural revolution" was a good thing. From July on, millions of students and other young people from the provinces had been coming to Peking to "gain revolutionary experience" and "establish contacts". This almost doubled Peking's population and clogged up the city.

The provincial hungweipings would wander in droves from college to college, and would make a point of going to see Tien

An Men Square and Kukung, the former imperial palace. They clamoured for a glimpse of Chairman Mao himself, and he would put in an appearance on the government stand in the central square, to be seen by millions at a time. One day he even stepped down from the stand and, as the ecstatic crowd parted to let him pass, walked a few paces up and down the square.

In September, the railroads leading to the capital swarmed with hungweipings. They also came in busses and in commandeered trucks. Sometimes they would even try to take over motor vehicles belonging to army units and establishments.

So long as the weather was fairly good, the "comrades from the provinces" could sleep out in the open, but once the rains set in—and that autumn in Peking was an unusually rainy one—they had a pretty hard time of it. All the universities were thronged with hungweipings. Down at the Pedagogical University, they had taken over the six-storeyed office building, all the auditoriums at the philological department, and the library. That was not enough, however, and the teachers' families were finally told to make room for them. It was a simple arrangement: one of the three dwelling houses was cleared altogether, the floors in all the rooms were laid out with bamboo matting, and the newcomers would sleep there in rows.

As a matter of fact, the Peking hungweipings were not very happy about the provincials, and the hostility would sometimes erupt in clashes. They called for a ten-day limit to the provincials' stay in Peking, and urged restrictions in food: these people, they said, had come to Peking to study Chairman Mao's "thought" and not to make hogs of themselves, and so should not be sold any fruit, meat or eggs.

Some political disputes arose as well. One clash near the Medical College was particularly fierce. At its entrance, the locals had hung out a banner saying: "Non-revolutionary arrivals from the outskirts! Get out of here!"

Whenever a large, well-organised party of provincials arrived at the Pedagogical University, they were invited to attend a convict "exhibition", where dozens of lecturers, professors and Party functionaries would be paraded before them with plywood boards in their hands to make the "young revolutionaries" see for themselves that these men were in their power.

The "mastering of revolutionary experience" usually went off smoothly and yielded tangible results. Thus, upon their

return to Tsilin, the students of the local Pedagogical Institute, taking a leaf from the Peking hungweipings' book, launched a Peking-style "cultural revolution".

It sometimes happened, however, that a group of "provincial comrades" took a sharp stand against the torture and brutality, refusing to recognise the "crimes" of the "cultural revolution" victims. Whenever that happened, they would be bundled off unceremoniously and branded as "counter-revolutionaries".

The young provincials who stayed at the University that summer came from every part of the country, some hailing from all sorts of out-of-the-way places, and from district technical and vocational schools. They were very curious, were always glad to have a word with a foreigner, their conversation was easy and spirited, and their manner friendly and unaffected. There was no sign of the Peking-type mistrust, hypocrisy and hostility. They had always been sealed off from the rest of the world, some of them never dreaming of a trip to Peking, so that now they were all agog about the most everyday things, and saw the "cultural revolution" as something of a wonderful festival.

I liked to talk to the provincials and had many conversations with them. They were naive, open-hearted, and had very little knowledge.

A boy once came up to me in the University park and asked: "Have you got any red-haired fellow-countryman staying here? I've heard that some of the whites have blue eyes and red hair. I'd very much like to see one for myself!"

I could not help smiling, but there was nothing I could do for him.

"Are there any negroes at any Peking institute?" he went on.

I told him that most were at the Institute of Languages.

"I'll go down there this afternoon. I must," said the young activist.

The Soviet Union, I found, was a closed book to them. Chinese propaganda had done its utmost to impress on the population that the Soviet people were all but starving. Almost anyone I talked to was sure to ask me whether bread in my country was in short supply and whether meat was beyond the people's reach.

Those I talked to never had any meat, except on great occasions, or any milk either. Butter in China is so scarce that foreigners are the only ones to have it, and even babies are given rice-water instead of milk. So, when I described some

Soviet diets and denied that there was any bread shortage, I often felt that they did not believe me, for against their own background my story was simply incredible.

Once I asked a hungweiping sitting next to me in a bus whether he was glad to be a student. He replied with a firm "No". I told him that young people in the Soviet Union were keen to get an education and that many of them wanted to become engineers and specialists in other lines.

"It's different in China. It's not worth being an intellectual over here," he remarked with a winning frankness, but when I asked him why, he did not reply.

Whenever I wanted to go down to Peking University to see my friends, I had to wait for a special hungweiping bus, because it was a long, two-and-a-half hour walk away, and the transport service was in a shambles. The only way out for me was to join the hungweipings.

Every bus of that kind (as well as every other city bus) had a "revolutionary brigade" of its own. These were usually made up of schoolchildren, who took turns shouting themselves hoarse with Mao quotations and singing songs about him. Many of those in the bus would not join in out of sheer weariness, but I found my ears ringing with the ceaseless din of the "cultural revolution".

The bus "brigade" would also go in for some concrete propaganda, reading out a fresh editorial or the latest hungweiping order or ultimatum. Now and again, they would render a dramatic account of some memorable episode in the "revolutionary struggle". Once I had to listen to a long-winded report on the adventures of a group of Peking hungweipings in the neighbouring town of Tientsin. The report was set out on several duplicated sheets pinned together, and here is the gist of what it said.

In late August, a group of hungweipings at Peking University suddenly came to feel "very bitter" about the slow progress of the "cultural revolution" in Tientsin, a large town in North China, with a population of more than four million, and only a few hours by train from Peking. So the hungweipings (who were no more than a dozen, with the report listing all of them by name) decided to go down and have a look.

At the railway station, they had to grapple with some "hidebound conservatives", who wanted to check their tickets. The hungweipings gave them a "revolutionary rebuff" and travelled free of charge.

Once in Tientsin, they went straight to the CPC's City Committee, where the hall porter asked them what they wanted.

"We want to revolt against the Tientsin black band!" they retorted.

The porter refused to let them in, but they "applied resolute force", overwhelmed him and went upstairs, to the top functionaries' offices.

"How dare you mess about with your scraps of paper while Chairman Mao urges a widespread cultural revolution?" they demanded, and began driving the Committee men out of their rooms and burning their "scraps of paper", that is, Party documents, right there on the floor.

They "sacked" the Committee's labour department, and went over to Second Secretary Li's office. Li, however, refused to "beat it", and as they tried to drag him out, he put up a fight, got hold of a chair and "inflicted a mortal injury" to one of the "cultural revolution heroes".

By then, all the Committee men had rallied together, with the Second Secretary taking the lead, and told the "heroes" to get out, "brazenly calling them bandits and hooligans". Li said their actions were "anti-popular and counter-revolutionary", to which they proudly replied:

"It's you who are a counter-revolutionary and a black bandit, Chairman Mao's enemy!"

Here the report gave a moving account of the stricken hungweiping dying on the floor and breathing out his "last words":

"Chairman Mao said: 'Revolution is no crime, rebellion is justified!' "

It is impossible to tell whether that part of the story was true or not, for tales of "murder" and "gallant death" were a good propaganda ploy.

Once again the Committee men told the surrounded hungweipings to go, but they refused:

"We revolutionaries are not afraid of death and are ready to die for Chairman Mao!"

A fight followed. The hungweipings fought with chairs and tables, hurling at the enemy whatever they could, biting and scratching away like the "heroes" they were.

Such were their "revolutionary deeds". Once they were thrown out into the street, they chanted:

"The light of Chairman Mao's ideas is not to be quenched! We shall yet come back and destroy your black den! Long live the great proletarian cultural revolution!"

The report ended with an appeal to all "fighters" in Peking to launch a "military crusade" against Tientsin, "to avenge the blood shed by the revolutionary heroes", topple the "black authorities", and establish a new, "revolutionary" regime.

The Tientsin City Committee and the Hopei Provincial Committee were solemnly proclaimed to be counter-revolutionary. The hungweipings urged their "fellow-fighters" to hold rallies to expose the Tientsin Committee, before setting forth to smash it up. The leaflet was in effect a "preparatory measure" designed to muster an audience for the mass rally that was to take place at Peking University in three days' time. All "provincial comrades" were also invited to come.

Reports of fresh clashes were coming in from all over the country, and many buildings in the streets of Peking were papered over (to a height of more than two metres) with hungweiping leaflets, casualty photographs, and appeals against "white terrorism". The hungweipings' own reports went to show that the people were resisting the onset of their "revolution". Although the hungweipings were always ready to blow their own trumpet, their reports could claim very few victories, but talked of resistance, "lack of understanding", and the "duped masses".

Hungweiping documents always made a point of covering up the actual workings of the "cultural revolution". Watching the movement from the grass roots, as it were, one could hardly tell where hungweiping initiative proper was subordinate to orders from above.

The whole of the hungweipings' "revolutionary" activity hinged on their total impunity, this being ensured by the Maoist-controlled army and the punitive agencies.

Every morning now, the hungweipings would line up for roll-call. I passed them on my way to the dining-room, skirting them from behind—the perfect quadrangles of boys and girls, silent and motionless.

The leader would glance up and down the lines and bark out:

"One, two, three!"

Thereupon the whole lot would start up a dutiful chant, echoing the leader in clear ringing voices as he reeled off one Mao quotation after another from a special list drawn up by the army's Political Department.

"Now for a song! One, two, three!"

And off they went:

"Out on the high seas rely on the helmsman,
Mao Tse-tung is like the sun...."

The singers were young, mostly in their teens or early twenties. Anyone who saw the goings on among the Chinese young in the summer of 1966 could not help asking the disturbing question of how things could have come to such a state.

As I watched the Chinese in their ways and customs, I saw for myself that politeness and obedience were a universal tradition. But why was it that the young thought so little of riding roughshod over their elders, and were so dead-sure that they were right in abusing them, as if there was no such thing as human dignity at all? They had been so apt to take for granted that the outrages and abuses they were committing were a revolution against erring superiors, and had so readily turned fanatical.

Why had a single radio programme and a small newspaper item, I thought, been enough to spark off an explosion?

The Chinese are early risers and start their day at dawn. At five in the morning the student and young workers' hostels would ring with the usual triumphal call:

"This is the Central People's Radio Station. We shall now read out some of Chairman Mao's sayings. Our great teacher, great leader, great commander, great helmsman, Mao Tse-tung said...."

Thus, every morning the radio would reel off a full list of the idolised man's titles.

The victory of the people's revolution in 1949 and the successes of socialist construction in 1950-1957 had set Mao Tse-tung up as a revolutionary leader. The country's working masses regarded the CPC and its leaders as an authority not to be questioned. But the grave political mistakes committed by Mao and his men, their economic adventurism, arbitrary cultural policies, the split they had effected in the socialist camp, and their line towards China's international isolation undermined the prestige they had won in the course of the revolution and socialist construction. When thinking men could no longer help seeing the suffering and disasters that Mao's adventurist line had inflicted on Chinese society, its rulers felt it was time to substitute blind faith for conviction, implicit compliance for conscious discipline, dogma and quotation-worship for scientific thinking, and dumb obedience for loyalty to ideals.

In this way, they first began spreading the ideas of asceticism, self-sacrifice, and preparation for war, and eventually

sacrificed the country's best men to the young, giving the latter a free hand to deal with them as they liked. In return, the young were proclaimed to be "the vanguard", "vehicles of Mao Tse-tung thought", and Mao's personal "red guard".

The whole thing had, perhaps, started with Lei Feng.

Lei Feng, a soldier, had worked as a driver at a military car pool, and died in an accident. A pupil of his was driving a lorry which skidded in the mud and crashed into a pole of the wrought-iron fence. The pole fell on Lei Feng, who was running alongside the lorry, so that his death may have been due to his own carelessness. Anyway, there was nothing heroic about his death. It was his life, however, that was proclaimed to have been heroic: shortly after his death, came the publication of Lei Feng's diary. It is impossible to tell whether the diary was authentic, and whether Lei Feng had kept a diary at all. In any event, the diary was just what Chinese propaganda wanted. To paraphrase an old saying, if Lei Feng's diary had not existed, Chinese propaganda would have invented it.

Mao Tse-tung made a personal study of the diary and gave his opinion about it, putting it down on paper in four succinct, calligraphic characters: "Learn from Lei Feng", which were then duplicated in countless numbers across the country.

But what did the young people find once they started modelling their life on Lei Feng? Lei Feng, they were told, had always learned from Mao Tse-tung. Before doing anything at all, like going down to the barber's or washing his clothes, he had always read an extract from Mao, and no matter what the original actually applied to—revolution, civil war or production—had always managed to single out an appropriate passage, being an adept at stretching the meaning of any quotation to suit his own purposes and qualify any step he was about to take. This made it quite clear what Mao's appeal really meant: to learn from Lei Feng was to learn from Mao himself.

But following Lei Feng's example was a sinister thing in itself.

In his lifetime Lei Feng had never done anything bad: his sole purpose had been to do good to others (according to his own lights), while exercising severe self-control. He was an ascetic in the matter of food and clothes, denied himself love and personal happiness, courted suffering wherever he could, and sought to efface himself completely, making himself fully subservient to Mao, the living ideal. But by quelling the man within, Lei Feng was in effect denying everyone's right to be human. The only man who could claim that right was the sun-

like Mao, while all the rest were meant to be cogs in a giant machine crowned by Mao, the embodiment of all wisdom.

The hungweipings of 1966 and 1967 followed Lei Feng's example, elaborating his moral principles and making active use of them. Their tatzupaos said: "Learn from the highest instructions, obey none but the highest instructions, model your life on none but the highest instructions!"

Where a man does not see himself as a human being, he will also refuse to see other people as human beings. But supposing a man wants to remain human? In that event, Mao decreed, he will be a "freak and a monster". The hungweipings elucidated: "freaks and monsters" were inhuman, there was nothing human about them at all, and they were to be treated accordingly.

That was inhuman logic, the logic of suppression and thralldom. Unjust oppression has a way of corrupting mostly those who serve it. Thus, the Lei Feng campaign for asceticism and unreasoning obedience took no more than four or five years to produce its own thugs and cutthroats. Nor is there anything paradoxical about this: the hungweipings did not see their victims as human: those they were insulting, oppressing and killing were mere "freaks and monsters", "bad elements", "counter-revolutionaries" and "exploiters".

To spell out these hypocritical terms, the "freaks and monsters" were leading Party functionaries suspected of disloyalty to Mao Tse-tung, and all socialist-minded intellectuals. The "bad elements" were grass-roots Party members whose conscience bid them remain loyal to the Party, and theirs was a sad lot, indeed. The "counter-revolutionaries" were those who did not like the "cultural revolution" and it was ironical that many civil-war veterans were classed under that head, their wounds and medals making very little difference. The "exploiters" were people who let flats, tailors and hairdressers, all the little men without protection in China. At the same time, the government made sure that the real exploiters—the national bourgeoisie—were left alone, even by the hungweipings.

One of the main factors behind the moral degeneration of the young was undoubtedly their upbringing in the Lei Feng spirit. Myths—age-old, well-tried and highly potent instrument—were more poison for the spirit.

Let us take a closer look at the myths that were being instilled into young minds on the eve of the "cultural revolution". Their Lei Feng grooming had made them particularly

susceptible to myths, for men conditioned to self-abnegation will believe anything sanctified by the leader, especially where they are treated with downright flattery.

I have already said that in July 1966, I heard a speech by Chiang Ching, Mao's wife, before the "revolutionary" students. She started out by saying that young people were the "vehicles" of Mao "thought". It was only those, she said, who had grown up over the preceding seventeen years who had that ingrained virtue. They were best at mastering Mao "thought", the science of all sciences. She spoke with scorn of the "bourgeois" professors, who were "stuffing" the young with "worthless specialised knowledge" with a mean aim in view: "to leave them no time for mastering great Mao Tse-tung thought".

She urged the students to "keep trying" to change their parents' warped minds. Grown-ups, she said, were "infected" with the notions of the old society and could never be imbued with Mao thought to the extent of the young.

Flattery of this kind had a very tangible effect, stripping the hungweipings of every shred of respect for their elders—phenomenon quite without parallel in tradition-steeped China. In late August 1966, when Peking swarmed with hungweipings arriving from all over the country, elderly people stayed away from the streets, where they were never safe. Any one of them could be stopped, surrounded, questioned about his past and present, and probed for knowledge of Mao "thought"; any one of them was a handy object to beat up and abuse, given the urge to do so, and there was, in fact, all the urge in the world. The hungweipings never hesitated: why should they? They were the vehicles of Mao "thought", while the rest of mankind had yet to rise to their level.

Another myth circulated by Chinese propaganda, that of the "Chinese man's" national exclusiveness and superiority, a myth smacking of unadorned racism, is of similar origin. Thus, a most revealing song, "Peking—Tokyo", tells of the peoples of the Far East marching forward in step towards a common destiny.

But China's superiority over the rest of the world is even more prominent in Chinese propaganda than the common future of the yellow race. The young are being told that China is the only "truly revolutionary" state.

"Our rivers and mountains are red, red for ever!" hungweiping demonstrators kept chanting. "China will never change colour!"

China, we are told, is a country of "uninterrupted revolution".

As I listened to the hungweipings' bombastic "revolutionary" talk, I would ask them this simple question:

"Tell me, why do you need a revolution at all? What's it for?"

They could never give me an answer to the point, for their revolution had neither meaning nor purpose. They said:

"The revolution is necessary to keep the people and the country revolutionary."

Why the tautology? Because their revolution was in effect meant to keep China Maoist, wrought-up, feverish, poverty-stricken, and obedient, for that was the only way to hold a great people in check under Mao's personality cult.

Another myth used to work up a feeling of nationalist arrogance among the people was that China was fortunate enough to have the sun-like Mao himself, the world's greatest, wisest, and most revolutionary leader. Wasn't he something the country could indeed be proud of? Didn't he entitle the Chinese to all the vanity and arrogance?

Incidentally, my GDR friends told me that whenever they opened an illustrated Chinese magazine published in German they would start at a sinister reminder: there it was, the word "führer", staring them in the face, every page erupting in dozens of "führers"—in headlines, captions, and the text itself, in letters big and small. It certainly gave one food for thought.

The hungweipings took an oath to dedicate their lives to spreading Mao's "great thoughts". China was, of course, the first country to be won over. But the deadlines for the victory of the "cultural revolution" had to be put off again and again: first it was January 1967, then September 1967, and then January 1968. The hungweipings could not meet their deadlines, for the people's resistance was growing.

The hungweipings were always ready to enlarge on the Chinese people's merits, their modesty, industry, self-discipline, thrift, and love for their family and children. There is no denying these merits, but no one had ever claimed national superiority on such grounds. The hungweipings, however, believed the people's best features to be their most powerful argument. But how about the hungweipings themselves, did they have any of the working man's merits?

When a Soviet driver, an ordinary working lad, came to work at the Soviet Embassy in China, he was amazed at what he saw: people streaming along the streets in all manner of

processions and demonstrations, "shock-action units" of hungweipings with red armbands tearing about in trucks, arrivals from the provinces marching up and down in rows, people wandering all over the place, waving about little red books, chanting slogans, singing songs, sacking shops and hairdressing and other establishments.

"Just look at all those spongers!" the Soviet driver exclaimed. "I wonder who feeds them."

It was, of course, the Chinese people who had to feed the millions of young ruffians.

Another of the hungweipings' essential features was their fierce, fanatical anti-Sovietism. They described the Soviet people as "modern revisionists" and maintained that struggle against them was paramount.

For a long time now, the Mao group has carried on an unflagging anti-Soviet campaign. Every single aspect of the Chinese people's ideological conditioning stands out in glaring contrast to the communist ideal.

The myths about the illustrious Mao and the "true revolutionary spirit" of the Chinese would have been impossible to spread without the anti-Soviet slander. Hence the barefaced lie about a deal between the USSR and the USA, and the emphasis on the need to fight against "the two superpowers".

But were the hungweipings as selfless and fanatical as they appeared? Was it true that their sole desire was to perform "revolutionary" feats and sacrifice themselves for the sake of their leader? No, indeed. They took care of themselves very well.

"Chairman Mao has bequeathed China to you! You are to govern the state!" Chiang Ching assured the hungweipings, and they roared with delight. They were craving to take over the helm! They had a bright prospect before them, that of involvement in power and personal advantage.

The "cultural revolution" brought all education to a halt. The hungweipings refused to study. Nor would they work, for they had grown used to idleness, rallies, parades, processions and pogrom-like "revolutionary operations". The army had provided the hungweipings with uniforms, so that they had no more worries about clothes, when at the time many people in China did not have a change of trousers, because fabric rationing was very tight. In fact, they had done very well out of the "cultural revolution": they were being fed and did not have to do a stitch of work. Besides, they travelled all over the country—naturally, free of charge—to "establish revolutionary ties". Wherever a "conservative" railwayman insisted

on their buying tickets, he would be beaten up without much ado for his "lack of consciousness". They enjoyed the "cultural revolution" as a leisurely pastime, in the course of which they shed other people's blood.

Such was the rise of the younger generation of Maoists: first unleashed in May 1966, they were allowed to act with impunity, promised power, and granted privileges. In other words, they were duped, bribed and used as a cat's-paw.

But did the poison go right through the whole young generation? No, not by any means. That is why the "cultural revolution" has never scored any final "victory", and the Soviet Union still has many sincere friends in China, whose friendship commands high respect, for it has been tried by ordeal.

X. WRECKERS AT LARGE

"DOWN WITH MUSEUMS AND MONUMENTS!" DEATH OF THE WRITER LAO SHE.
TIEN HAN'S LOT, RENEGADES FROM CHINESE CULTURE

The "cultural revolution" was now in full swing. None of the Chinese students at the Pedagogical University had had any classes ever since it had broken out in May, and I had not had any consultations since July. I was on my own now, and my consultant, Professor Kuo, was nowhere to be seen.

The Maoists had termed the seventeen years of the people's power a "black reign". Professor Kuo was a Party man and Deputy-Dean of his department, which naturally made him a criminal and "a party to the black reign". He could be put down at any time.

I would wake up at six in the morning, the usual hour, to the deafening strains of a military march coming over the loudspeaker in the corridor. Then the announcer would launch into the daily litany of Mao's official titles: great teacher, great leader, great commander, great helmsman.

I would lie in bed listening to the radio: with the library fitted out as a hungweiping doss house and my research plan ruined past all hope, I had nowhere to hurry.

As soon as I opened my eyes, I would find myself staring straight into the Mao portrait over Ma's bed.

One day I woke up to hear an unusual din coming in through the window over the roar of the loudspeaker. An endless column of hungweipings was trudging along the street to the roll of drums. They were apparently on their way to another gala meeting with their leader, and there were not enough busses and trucks to carry them all. Three meetings of

that kind had already been held, and on each occasion the city had been virtually paralysed.

The campus appeared deserted. The two hungweiping detachments, vying with each other in "revolutionary spirit", had already piled into trucks. The Peking hungweipings did not have to go on foot, for they were the movement's élite. They had already seen Chairman Mao, had smashed up the city's Party organisations and organs of people's power, and had done many other "services" to the movement. The University's Cultural Revolution Committee was busy establishing a "new order" on the campus, although the extremists, the fringe elements, disapproved of it as not being quite revolutionary.

I walked along an avenue to the city centre. The busses were not running: they had been commandeered by the hungweipings, so that workers and employees had to go to work by bicycle, while those who had intended to go by bus now trudged along on foot. I walked in the midst of a silent, sedate throng.

Peking was still a place of raids and pogroms, with hungweiping slogans changing every two or three days, and targets ranging from book-sellers and hairdressers to "bourgeois goods" like crockery painted over with flowers. What were they up to now?

Passing through a breach in the medieval city wall, I went into the old section of Peking. Here something unusual was afoot: hammers banging away all over the place and people perched on rooftops. The old part of Peking had as yet changed very little and still had its ancient look. The street was lined with one-storeyed buildings with grey-tile roofs and blank grey-brick walls looking out upon the road. Trees were the only ornamental feature of the urban landscape: Peking has no lawns but a great many trees. The inhabitants of the old houses had now climbed out onto their rooftops and were busy hammering away at the stucco cornices, the tile sculpturing at the corners of the roofs, and the inscriptions etched in the stone of the façades. The street, sparsely ornamented as it was, was now littered with broken tiles, and the pale, freshly chipped spots on the roofs looked like living sores.

Carefully printed hungweiping leaflets plastered on the walls of virtually every old building proclaimed the day's task. The hungweipings had forcibly taken over the printing-works at the Pedagogical University and also, apparently, throughout the city. Mao had said that "power grows out of the barrel of a

gun", and the hungweipings had a reverent regard for that pronouncement. They had yet to get the guns, but violence had always been a cult with them. They wanted the printing-works to carry on the "cultural revolution", every hungweiping detachment itching to have its own printing-press. The leaflets on the walls called on the people of Peking to display their loyalty to Mao "thought" by destroying the leftovers of the "accursed past", that is, the mythical monsters on the rooftops and the stone lions at the gates once installed as a charm against evil spirits, and the ornaments on gates and façades—indeed, everything that made the everyday life of the ordinary people more ornamental. I saw an old man listlessly chipping away at a stone lion at his gates.

"Is this an old lion?" I asked.

"Yes, he's old. Even my grandfather didn't know when they'd set him up. He's always been here."

As the old man struck out, the lion gradually lost its shape and turned into a slab of stone.

"Is he in the way? Going to pull him down?" I continued my guarded inquiries.

"Later, perhaps, we'll take him away altogether. Now we just have to show that we're not afraid of him."

"Do you believe in spirits yourself?"

"No."

"Did you ever believe in them?"

"No, never."

"This was a beautiful lion."

"Very beautiful indeed, well-made and very solid. Look how solid he is," the old man replied as he chipped away. He was on his guard, for people were beginning to gather around us, some youngsters with red armbands among them. A man couldn't be expected to say much in that kind of company. No wonder the Chinese were now somewhat short in their answers. To survive the "cultural revolution", one had to be very cautious—and lucky, what's more. No one was quite safe, no one knew what would happen tomorrow, let alone the day after.

The Hsitan Arcade, where I still went regularly, was crowded as of old. The Arcade was very old, with few signs of modernisation—an intricate maze of corridors, passageways, galleries and covered courtyards housing numerous shops, tiny theatres, restaurants, dining-rooms, and snack-bars. Sales counters everywhere bore the usual sign: "Comrades revolutionary customers! If you think any of the goods here look

bourgeois, please let the management know so that action may be taken."

Now that many goods had been taken off the shelves, the choice was much smaller. Menus everywhere were the same. Peking had had many Moslem eating-houses offering very good roast mutton, and I had often sat down at a small table just outside the Arcade to have a meal.

That day, however, the eating-house was closed, with the tables and benches piled up along the wall and hungweiping patrols scuttling about. I watched them leading away a batch of men, some held in a tight grip, others with arms twisted round behind their backs.

I went north. In Chinese cities, which are laid out in strict quadrangles facing the four cardinal points, people always say: going south, going north.

In a wide sidelane leading from Hsisa, a busy intersection, stood Kuangchissu, one of Peking's most famous Buddhist temples. I had had a good look at it back in 1958, but now, eight years later, I could not get in. Its beautiful red gates were plastered over with proclamations and ultimatums printed by schoolchildren on school rotary presses.

The temple had been built under the Ch'in Dynasty (12th century A. D.), and completed under the Ming Dynasty (15th century A. D.). Its gates had been faced with figured colour tiles, but these were now gone. I gathered from the proclamations that the old monks had refused to chip away the tiles and that the hungweipings and the schoolchildren, the "little fore-runners" of the revolution, had had to do it themselves.

Turning off the sidewalk, I approached the gates and picked up a few shards with bits of colour pictures on them. None of the numerous passers-by stopped to look at me or paid me any attention, but just hurried past me and looked the other way, even though I was a foreigner. Their behaviour showed that I was doing something that was not done.

The gates were shut tight, but through a chink in the old, cracked boards I saw the small front yard in disarray: iron censers turned upside down, flowers plucked and trampled, and the nearest portal criss-crossed with boarding and marked: "Boards not to be taken off!" I could not say what was inside, but the hungweipings had obviously done a thorough job of it.

What was most disconcerting, however, was that the people around me had been terrorised into perfect submissiveness and did not even dare notice the brazen-faced vandalism.

A short walk to the west of Hsisa took me to a white stupa, a Buddhist shrine, which stood in the heart of a working-class quarter. I made my way along a narrow lane teeming with inquisitive children. The stupa was not a museum, but housed a workers' club, a children's library, and something else on these lines. The stupa was still intact, because the hungweipings had not dared to go on a rampage in a working-class area. The man in charge of the library came out to ask me what I wanted, but said he could not let me in without a duly stamped paper.

The small bells that hung in a circle at the very top of the shrine, just beneath its gilded roofing, gave out a slight melodious tinkle.

"Very pleasant sound," I remarked.

"They tinkle even when there's not a breath of air. They never stop," he willingly replied and went on to tell me that as the bells were so high up, they always caught one current of air or another and kept ringing even when down below the weather was stifling.

I asked him whether inside the shrine everything was still intact.

"Yes," he said, "we have safeguarded the shrine." This was borne out by the tinkling bells above our heads.

In their fight against old ways and customs, the hungweipings had now fallen upon cultural monuments, chiefly wrecking the most important and valuable temples, which had previously been protected as museums and monuments of the past. The hungweipings were now destroying them to show that they were setting up a "new, revolutionary order" and had no use for the past.

Their actions met with unanimous condemnation throughout the world, so that in early September, Chou En-lai published a State Council directive on the protection of monuments. But the directive came much too late: the vandals on the loose had already done more damage to ancient monuments than the ravages of time.

I took a trolley down to Kukung, the imperial palace. As we passed Peihai Park, I saw that the gates were barred and that some men in overalls were chipping off the bas-relief sculpturing from the pedestal of the Buddhist temple on the central hill.

I got down at the next stop, together with the rest of the crowd. They were provincial hungweipings who had come to Peking to be "seasoned" in the "cultural revolution" and to

gain "revolutionary experience". Like every visitor to Peking (except that they got their trolley ride free of charge), they had now come to see Kukung (the Chinese for "former palace"). Up to then, these boys and girls had, of course, seen very little.

An "exhibition of revolutionary training" was on display at the museum, but one could also take a look at some of the halls and chambers. The guards at the gate did not let me in, however. I asked them why not: was it because the palace had also been damaged?

"Oh no," the guards replied, "the museum is being protected. But we're having lectures on the cultural revolution, which are not for foreigners." I believed them, because they were the usual museum keepers, who had put on red armbands. A group of real hungweipings, however, stood in the back-ground—just in case.

I did not mind the refusal: they were welcome to give any lectures they chose so long as they did not wreck the unique palace.

Now that all the busses had been taken over by the hungweipings, it was quite a problem to go out of town. We Soviet trainees went for an outing in an official Embassy car. Our driver, a likeable young fellow newly arrived from the Soviet Union, had still to get used to the "new order" and was somewhat nervous.

Outside the city there was no traffic at all, the roads were deserted. After an hour's drive we reached the foothills of Hsishan, the Western Mountains. The entrance to Piyunsi, the world-famous Blue Cloud Temple, was plastered over with tat-zupaos. The Temple, they said, was closed to the public. One vast sheet carried a decision by the Administrative State Council, signed by Chou En-lai, which said that the keepers of the Temple museum were to be regarded as hungweipings and were charged with protecting the Temple from any attack by "those who style themselves hungweipings but are in effect no more than thieves and riff-raff". In other words, even where the Chinese leaders tried to damp down the hooliganism, they made believe that it was not the hungweipings but thieves and riff-raff who were to blame.

The hungweipings had obviously been here since my previous visit, when the Temple had still been open to the public.

An elderly man wearing an old-style black habit and a new-fashioned, hungweiping armband came out of a side portal and told us that the museum had been closed down.

"What's the matter? Is the Temple safe? What about the 500 saints? When will you reopen? What are you yourself?" we plied him with questions.

When he saw that we knew the monument well, he said with a sad smile:

"I'm a keeper. They've turned us into hungweipings to give us some prestige, for otherwise no one would obey us. But we're just a handful, there's nothing we could do. They burst in by the hundred..."

"How about the government decision?"

"It came too late, in September, but the worst damage was done in late August. They've stayed away for some time now."

It was one of those rare occasions when a Chinese would talk to us. The main thing was to make sure that there were no witnesses about, because when anyone else was present they preferred to keep silent. Most Chinese, we felt, had at heart a friendly feeling for the Soviet people and had not forgotten the years of friendship. But the fear of reprisal was paramount.

The keeper was quite calm, for there was no one around and the medieval brick walls were unlikely to have been bugged. He told us that the sackers had forced their way into the museum, beaten up the keepers, broken sculptures, hacked away at ornaments, and smashed vessels.

"They took away all they could," he said. "Maybe they want to sell it to foreigners and make a pile of money."

"But this is sheer plunder!"

"Plunder, indeed. There were many tramps, villains and hooligans, and they have smashed up all the sculptures in the chambers along the main axis."

The lay-out of Buddhist temples in China is strictly symmetrical with respect to a long central axis always running from north to south, with rows of small closed courtyards strung out along that axis to symbolise ascent along the celestial circles. Each of these courtyards ends in a main chamber with its central sculpture, so that in an ordinary temple the wrecking of the chambers along the main axis would have meant the ruin of all that was most precious. What makes the Blue Cloud Temple world-famous is a chamber with the statues of 500 Buddhist saints, standing in a maze of passages to create an unforgettable effect of a silent assembly. The gilded life-size statues carved in wood all have different, individual attitudes and vivid expressions on their faces. But whatever their differences, a glance shows each to be the image of a most remarkable man.

"Have the saints survived?" we asked.

"They have. They didn't find them. Overlooked them, you see, because they didn't know," he scornfully explained.

I congratulated him, for this was good luck, indeed. The unique hall with the statues of the saints lay to the west of the main axis, and to find the door leading into it one had to know where it was. But the temple had been open to the public for many years, and had had thousands of visitors, with pointers to show the way. So, the hungweiping plunderers had obviously never been here before. The keeper seemed to guess what I was thinking and said:

"We did our best: we took off all the pointers and hid whatever we could, but that was a mere nothing. I couldn't say whether the Temple will ever be open again."

I asked him about Wofosy, the near-by Sleeping Buddha Temple. He said it had also been damaged but to a lesser extent.

We drove over to Wofosy, but the girl-hungweipings on guard at the entrance did not let us in and would not even talk. Through an open portal I managed to get a glimpse of the first chamber. Happily, the statues inside it were safe, although the hungweipings had decked them out with abusive tatzupaos, which made them look more like scarecrows than ancient statues. Here the hungweipings did not apparently destroy anything, but confined themselves to defiling the monument. The famous Sleeping Buddha was also safe.

Patachu, or the Eight Great Places—eight ancient Buddhist temples in a hillside park on the outskirts of Peking—was in a sad state. We could not get in, and drove over to Yihoyuan to do some rowing. The park was deserted: the people stayed away, for it was no pleasure to be questioned and prodded by a "cultural revolution" patrol. For the time being, we foreigners, however, were free to take our rest as we chose.

Ours was the only boat on the vast lake—a truly amazing situation in China. A sudden downpour of rain trapped us under the marble bridge at the farther end of the lake. The Empress Tsyhsu had built a special gallery for rainy days, which ran along the shore of the lake. The best masters had painted it over with scenes from Chinese love novels, feats of arms and the miracles of the Maoist deities. Several young painters, probably students, were at work in the gallery, smearing over the ancient murals with a coarse pattern of clouds and roses. Poets, monks and beauties were disappearing under a coat of pinkish paint, while bearded, fierce-looking

imperial generals remained untouched—were they, perhaps, meant to inspire the hungweipings to fresh military exploits? The walls of old pavilions, arches and gateways had all been covered up with "cultural revolution" slogans.

For seventeen years now, the people's power had been doing its best to locate, collect, restore and catalogue the treasures spared by the centuries of war and imperialist plunder. For the first time in Chinese history, the museums had been opened to the people. But what was happening now? As I watched the destruction of the old murals, I recalled the giant—symbolically giant—padlock on the door of the History Museum in Chenchou, and the hungweipings' attempts to wreck the Peking History Museum, which had to be closed down as a matter of precaution. Young vandals were running riot in China with impunity. It was a strange and painful sight to see.

One is never indifferent at the sight of men being killed, even when they are total strangers and one knows nothing of the crimes imputed to them. It is, of course, much worse to read of the death of a man one has seen and held in deep respect, a man whose books one has read and treasured.

One fine September day—and autumn is the best season in Peking—I went out into the city. The campus was deserted, for the hungweipings had already left early in the morning.

That day they concentrated on Wangfuching, the central trading thoroughfare. They searched every shop for "bourgeois goods" like European-style coats and pointed-toe shoes that were already going out of fashion in Europe. As I walked along, patrol guards kept grabbing me by the sleeve, but reluctantly let me go on spotting my University badge.

The walls here were covered with "wanted" notices for men who were in hiding from the hungweipings. One notice carried a photograph of a young man and said that under the "black reign" he had taken a course in the Soviet Union, had then lectured in physics at Lanchow University, and had dared to mock at "Mao Tse-tung thought". When they tried to seize him, however, he escaped and went into hiding. The man had originally come from Peking, so the Lanchow hungweipings thought he may well have gone to Peking. They were now asking their "fellow-fighters" in Peking to help them catch him. Escaping from the hungweipings was now tantamount to an admission of guilt and spelled death, usually at the hands of a wrought-up mob. Running ahead of events, let me add that a fortnight later another notice on the wall announced a "piece

of good news": the Lanchow fugitive had been run to ground at his Peking relatives' place and sent down to be dealt with.

The "wanted" notices ran to several dozen—a veritable manhunt.

I went on along the street towards Peking's biggest department store, a new four-storeyed building, which stands a little away from the road and forms a small square in front of the main entrance. On the corner of the store I saw a written report by one of the city's "fighting units", which was headlined: "Bourgeois element Lao She proves his counter-revolutionary nature by committing black suicide."

I refused to believe what the leaflet said, I could not. Even when I was back in Moscow, I went on hoping that it was not true. After all, there had been no official announcement, and the hungweiping leaflet—an irresponsible thing—could well have lied. But here is what it said.

The hungweiping "fighting unit" was combing a part of the city, probing every hole and corner. When they entered Lao She's flat, they experienced "a feeling of indignation and revolutionary rage". The old writer's way of life, they found, was a "blend of feudalism and capitalism". The walls of his flat were hung with pictures by Chinese masters, and not a single Mao portrait among all that "feudal rubbish". He also had a valuable collection of old china, but "not a single cup with a red banner on it". His library, too, was "stuffed with poisonous literature" like ancient Chinese volumes and "heaps" of foreign books, all of which went to prove that he was a "foreign slave". Indeed, he also had some "poisonous books in Russian".

The writer did not show any respect for the raiders, so they decided to "fight him in the spirit of the cultural revolution".

First they told him to stand up, lectured him on the greatness of Mao "thought" and suggested that he should "break with his counter-revolutionary past" in a simple, decisive and explicit way: by destroying, immediately and of his own accord, every object of feudal, bourgeois and foreign culture in his flat. But the writer kept a "counter-revolutionary silence". The hungweipings talked it over and decided that he had given himself away and that their duty now was to "help him turn revolutionary". They set to work at once, tearing up all the pictures and smashing all the china, as the helpless family watched their antics.

The ritual called for a "verbal fight" and, taking a break from the violence, the raiders tried to remonstrate with him

again. They explained (the leaflet proudly emphasised) in a polite and thorough way that the rotten bourgeois culture around him was "powerless in the face of shining Mao Tse-tung thought, falling to pieces like your lousy crockery".

Lao She could stand it no longer and began to speak. He "boasted of his services to Chinese culture" and "demagogically" called them barbarians. He ended by saying that they knew not what they were doing, and would come to regret it when they grew up. His final statement was taken to mean downright revilement of Mao Tse-tung "thought" and refusal to open himself out to "revolutionary counsel". The hungweipings tried to help him along and said that wholehearted involvement in the "cultural revolution" was the best way for him to understand the movement. They suggested, therefore, that he should burn his own books there and then. Lao She did not even budge. They offered to help him bring the books together "considering his age and physical infirmity", but still he would not move. Then they took him by the arms so as to make him burn the books, but, the leaflet protested, they did not apply any violence or abuse him in any way. On the contrary, they swore, their was a model of proper and polite behaviour.

But at this point, Lao She's wife suddenly "pounced" upon the hungweipings and, "in a fit of counter-revolutionary rage", began biting and scratching them "like a mad dog" to prevent them from "helping him to burn his books". In order to protect their own lives and health, the "revolutionary comrades" had to resort to force, quickly tying the woman's hands. In spite of his wife's "counter-revolutionary" behaviour, Lao She tried to shield her, so giving himself away altogether as an enemy of the "cultural revolution": "the truth will out". His hostility culminated in his suicide—he died "blinded by his class hatred".

"His mean, black suicide was meant to harm our revolutionary cause. In fact, however, he has merely admitted his feudal-bourgeois essence as a class enemy, disseminator of poison and foreign slave." The leaflet ended with the promise of a sure and early victory for the "cultural revolution" despite the scheming of its malicious enemies, who will even resort to suicide "as a provocation".

I refused to accept the cruel fact behind the shameless, bombastic rhetoric, but nothing had been heard of Lao She ever since.

In 1966, suicides in China were an everyday affair, for many people could not stand the ritual-like humiliations.

There were three suicides in two months at the Pedagogical University alone: a functionary of the disbanded "black" City Committee of the CPC living on the campus drowned himself in a canal near Yihoyuan Park; after three days and nights of public humiliation, a lecturer of the history department threw himself into a well; and a young student jumped out of fifth-floor window in the course of a meeting. As for all those who succumbed to strokes and heart failures after facing a disgrace rally for hours on end, they were said to have "died of various ailments".

But the report of Lao She's death was somewhat doubtful. It said that the writer had committed suicide in front of a whole "fighting unit", but did not give any details. Lao She was an old man in poor health (he was 67), while the youngsters had been used to do violence. They could well have killed him themselves, for he had been a man of pride and dignity and would never have stooped to kowtowing to the infuriated storm-troopers. Their own leaflet said that he had not bowed his head before them.

Lao She was widely known, both in China and abroad, for his many novels, stories, plays and essays. Two volumes of his collected works and more than a dozen other books have been published in the USSR. His *City of the Cat People* is a biting satire on great-Han chauvinism under the Kuomintang. His satire, however, is so powerful that it also presents a danger for every other breed of Chinese nationalists: the Maoists, too, have preferred not to allow the book a second printing.

I saw Lao She in 1958, when he came to meet a group of Soviet specialists working in China at the time. He came in, leaning lightly on his walking-stick, and told us about the books he had read, the schools he had gone to, his efforts to find a job as a youth, and about his father, who had been a very poor man all his life. He spoke in a quiet, unhurried way, and had the gentle smile of a man who had seen some hard times.

Lao She was unique in his perfect knowledge of the language, ways and customs of old Peking, its tea-rooms and narrow lanes, its poverty, joys and sufferings. No wonder his trenchant plays on everyday life in Peking had a stirring effect on the audience, who found that Lao She put a mirror to their own life.

The Soviet magazine *Novy Mir* (No. 6 for 1969) carried V. I. Sernanov's translation of Lao She's *City of the Cat People*, a masterpiece of Chinese literature. Future generations of Chinese will come to appreciate these efforts to make Chinese writings known to the world in the dark days of the "cultural revolution".

While the Chinese rulers and press have been slinging mud at the Soviet Union, the Soviet people have never varied in their interest in and concern for the Chinese cultural heritage, for they have the future of the Chinese people and their culture close at heart.

Upon the publication of Lao She's story in the Soviet Union, official China finally came up with an indirect statement about the writer's death. In April 1970, the magazine *Chinese Literature* carried an abusive article about the writer, seeking to blacken the victim and whitewash the real criminals. It said: "Not long ago, the social-imperialists evoked the ghost (sic!) of this shameless rogue and published in full a translation of his *City of the Cat People* in one of their journals. At the moment, criticism of this reactionary writer by the broad revolutionary masses of Peking is in full swing."

There is no point in quoting any farther: the whole article—a long string of juggled "facts" interspersed with eleven paragraphs of Mao quotations set out in bold type—boils down to a public admission that Lao She is no longer alive.

His books have been banned and burned in China, but he will yet be read both in China and abroad. His name is not to be deleted from the annals of Chinese culture.

The "cultural revolution" fighters, instigated by the Maoists, were attacking the country's intellectuals with perfect impunity.

What with the terrorism, the violence, the bitter struggle for power at the top and the anarchy and group strife at the grassroots China's cultural life had come to a standstill. Books and literary journals were no longer being published: all the newsprint now went into multimillion editions of Mao writings. Most bookshops had been wrecked, old films had been taken off the screen, and the theatres were staging no more than five or six "revolutionary" plays, which had survived because Chiang Ching had had a hand in producing them.

The Chinese film industry was turning out publicity films about Mao's meetings with the hungweipings, Chinese-Albanian friendship and nuclear-weapons tests.

In cultural terms, China was now a wasteland. Under the Mao personality cult, all creative activity had become impossible. The Maoists had turned against all national tradition and everything that had been achieved since Liberation, doing untold damage to the Chinese people and its cultural heritage.

The Maoist-controlled central press took to publishing hungweiping charges against convicted workers in culture, like Tien Han, Hsia Ycn, Ouyang Shan, Sha Tin, Chao Shu-li, and Hua Chun-wu.

The hungweipings couched their attacks in hackneyed terms, casting a slur on the whole of a man's life from beginning to end and never saying a word in his favour. The charges were also stereotyped: anti-socialist activity, bourgeois ideology, and revisionism. The real reason for any attack, however, was a man's resistance in one way or another to the spread of Mao's personality cult throughout the country.

On December 8, 1966, when I was already back in Moscow, a Peking radio station taken over by the hungweipings announced that on December 4 the Peking hungweipings had arrested a group of prominent men. Among these was Tien Han, Chairman of the Chinese Playwrights and Actors Union, author of the PRC's national anthem, a Communist since 1932, an active underground fighter and the country's best-known dramatist and script writer.

On December 6, one of the central papers, *Kuangmin jihpao*, devoted a whole page to the charges against Tien Han. It said, among other things: "On the eve of Liberation, this chameleon wormed his way into the Party.¹ He usurped power among the stage public and held it for more than ten years, loyally followed the counter-revolutionary revisionist line of the former Propaganda and Agitation Department under the CPC Central Committee and the former Ministry of Culture, used the "red banner" as a cover to fight against the red banner, and waged a rabid fight against the Party, socialism and Mao Tse-tung thought....

"At the start of the cultural revolution, he conspired with a handful of counter-revolutionary revisionist elements to come out in open opposition to Chairman Mao's great instructions on the cultural revolution."

The paper referred to Tien Han's stinging remarks against the Maoists. "Tien Han has long abused Mao Tse-tung thought,

¹As I have said, however, he had joined the Party in 1932, that is, 17 years before Liberation.

denounced the movement for a vigorous study and application of Chairman Mao's writings, and for the propaganda and implementation of Mao Tse-tung thought, claiming that one could 'sponge on all that forever'. He slandered Mao Tse-tung thought by denying its universal truth, correctness and relevance to all countries, even those beyond the four seas. In 1958, he alleged that 'in the final count, the CPC is still fairly young and lacks the necessary experience'.... Wherever his black hand could reach out, Tien Han tried to put out the bright light of Mao Tse-tung thought. All his major anti-Party statements were spearheaded against Chairman Mao, against Mao Tse-tung thought."

In setting out these charges, *Kuangmin jihpao* drew on the tatzupaos posted up at the Chinese Playwrights and Actors Union.

Even the hungweipings' vicious demagoguery goes to show that their efforts to "revolutionise" the country met with resistance on the part of the Chinese intelligentsia. Hence the massive repressions of 1966.

Tien Han was arrested in December, but the hungweipings had begun to harass him much earlier. In September, they came up with a demand to have a song about Mao, "The East Is Red", substituted for the PRC's national anthem, written by the "black bandit" Tien Han. They hung the central streets of Peking with leaflets calling on the "revolutionary comrades" to take an active part in the fight against the convicted workers in literature and the arts, Tien Han among them.

Tien Han, like the convicts at the Pedagogical University, was allowed to go home for the weekends, and the leaflets invited everyone to pay him a visit "at any hour of the day or night" to "fight" him in his own home: the victim was not to have a moment's respite.

Whenever I went to see my friends at the Language Institute that September, I had to pass the fouled-up grave of Ch'i Pai-shih, a great Chinese painter. He had died before the hungweipings emerged on the scene, so they desecrated his grave. Many foreigners passed the place, so that the outside world soon found out about this evil deed.

The hungweiping vandals were indeed having a field day. At Peking's musical schools, for instance, they would throw the grand pianos out of the window in a campaign against "foreign instruments". They forced the piano-players to make a written promise that they would never play the piano again, and those who refused (like Liu Shih-kun, a prizewinner at the interna-

tional Tchaikovsky competition in Moscow) would have their fingers crushed.

For all their talk of stamping out "old ways and customs", the Maoists were in effect no different from medieval vandals and fanatics.

One special feature of the Maoist political coup against the PRC's legitimate people's power was that the struggle revolved around culture and ideology. Hence the name of the movement, "cultural revolution"—a term counterfeited to look like a Leninist term.

The intellectuals, the writers in particular, have suffered a great deal at the hands of the raving, ignorant youngsters, who were free to humiliate, torture and kill by way of exerting an "influence" on the dissenters. Even so, those who "repented" were remarkably few.

I have already said that Kuo Mo-jo was the first to come out with a penitent statement. The Maoists advertised his speech in every way, inviting others to disavow their own selves and Chinese culture in return for a pardon from the Maoists. Some, of course, did. Thus, the Shanghai writer, Hu Wan-chun, did penance in 1967. He was a worker, and in the mid-1950s published some stories as an amateur writer, whose skill improved with the years. His short novel, *Domestic Question*, brought him renown because it was turned into a play that was staged in Shanghai with the blessings of Chiang Ching, Mao's wife. Quite naturally, there was much in his writings that was alien to the ideas of the "cultural revolution", and he was now confessing to having "partaken of the poison of the ideology of feudalism, capitalism and revisionism".

Here are some specimens of the writings of this neophyte Maoist. Hu's story is about Shanghai, but he starts out with a general declaration: "Support for or struggle against Chairman Mao's 'Speech' in Yenan is the criterion for distinguishing the revolutionary and the counter-revolutionary, the truly revolutionary and the pseudo-revolutionary." That is the usual view of the revolutionary approach taken by all the Maoists. Mao's speech on literature and art in Yenan in May 1942 was now declared to be the "summit of the aesthetic thought of Marxism-Leninism of our day".

Hu goes on: "For seventeen years since the establishment of the new China there has been a constant and acute struggle between two political lines in literature and the arts. The main reason for this was that in the centre and in the localities there

was the black line on literature and art, which was the direct opposite of the proletarian revolutionary line represented by Chairman Mao. This black line served to restore capitalism and was represented by a handful of counter-revolutionary revisionist elements like Lu Ting-yi, Chou Yang, Hsia Yan and others, and their chief secret pillar was the boss of those who were vested with power inside the Party and were moving along the capitalist way."

Hu parrots the hungweiping formulations, and there is need to explain what he says.

Lu Ting-yi, Chou Yang and Hsia Yan had, in fact, been old Communists, who had taken part in the Liberation struggle. Hsia Yan, for instance, had been leader of an underground group at the Kuomintang film studios in the 1930s. For 17 years after 1949, they took part in building the new China. Lu Ting-yi was in charge of the Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee, Chou Yang was his Deputy, and Hsia Yan was a Deputy Minister of Culture of the PRC and was in charge of China's cinema industry. The "boss", on whom they had allegedly relied, was none other than Liu Shao-chi, Chairman of the PRC, for at that time the papers were not yet in the habit of designating him by name, even if they were allowed to abuse him as they liked.

Hu went on to say that in 1962 "the black wind began to blow" in Shanghai. What were his charges against his opponents?

"They tried hard to implant the reactionary feudal, bourgeois and revisionist goods. Emperors, mandarins and generals, talented young men and beautiful young women strutted on the stage. Plays with the appearance of spirits and supernatural beings, love stories—all escaped from the cage as being the traditional repertory. The 'traditions' of the 1930s were developed on the screen, and much effort and money was put into filming the *Stage Sisters*. In literature, the 'great', 'foreign', 'ancient', 'feudal', 'bourgeois', and 'revisionist' was similarly cultivated. In the press much was being said about things that had nothing to do with politics, like 'literary trends', 'literary skill and style', and *The Fretwork Dragon of Literary Thought* was extensively quoted, but not a word was said about Chairman Mao's 'Speech'."

Let us try to translate Hu's writing from the hungweiping jargon to normal idiom. His adversaries popularised Chinese and foreign classics. On the stage they presented the traditional repertory of plays which the Chinese people liked. The

screen showed the revolutionaries' struggle in the 1930's, who were then acting without Mao's leadership—a monstrous crime, according to the hungweiping critic. The press popularised the famous fifth-century aesthetic treatise *The Fretwork Dragon of Literary Thought*, which can be compared with Aristotle's *Poetics*, but not in any sense with Mao's speech. The label "revisionist" was maliciously tagged on to Soviet literature, which had been much translated and avidly read in China.

He said that in Shanghai the key posts were filled by Mao's opponents. At the Second Session of the Shanghai branch of the Literature and Arts Association many well-known writers were admitted to membership and thus provided with a rostrum. During the session, the two men who led the Shanghai branch, Yeh Yi-chun and Kung Lo-sun, arranged for the showing of Soviet films—Hu calls them revisionist—and even the reading of Soviet journals.

Hu said that Keb'Ching-shi, First Secretary of the Shanghai City Committee of the CPC, was among Mao's supporters, and the men who led the Shanghai branch of the Literature and Arts Association fought against his influence. Hu is quite generous in lauding the activity of the late Keh, with emphasis on the fact that he "lent an attentive ear to the views of Comrade Chiang Ching". Consequently, the main criterion of the "revolutionary approach" is one's attitude to the views of Mao's wife.

Hu insisted that "every one of us must establish the absolute authority of Mao Tse-tung thought deep in our hearts", and admitted that not all was well with this "authority" business.

"We should soberly realise," he went on, "that deep in the hearts of our workers in literature and the arts and also in the organisations and establishments the absolute authority of Mao Tse-tung thought on literature and art has yet to be fully established.

"We should soberly realise: the counter-revolutionary revisionist elements represented by Chou Yang and Hsia Yan held sway in literary and artistic circles for such a long time that they have struck poisonous roots in many places, and still have strength. We have uprooted some of these, but a part remains, and has gone into hiding.

"We should soberly realise: there is confusion in the ranks of workers in literature and the arts; it is not so easy to distinguish between the Left, the Centre and the Right, and the class ranks round the Left are only just taking shape; the revisionist line in

literature and art has yet to be fully criticised, the face of some of the old leaders has still to be clarified, power has not yet been taken in some organisations."

Indeed, Mao's "thought" had far from triumphed completely, but the "confusion", in which the organisers themselves did not know Right from Left, gave much room for settling personal scores, for endless evil doings, machinations and persecutions. After all, the "roots" which were being eradicated were living people. The leaders, whose "faces were not yet clarified", had been building the new China for seventeen years. Chinese society was being mutilated by group struggle and implantation of the personality cult. The Maoists openly called their criticism "gun-fire", but the guns were not trained at sparrows but at men, the best men in China, men with a revolutionary past, those who had not been intimidated by Kuomintang reprisals and who had fought for the people's revolution.

Let us note that even the semi-official "epochal" work did not quite escape the vicissitudes of fortune under the "new order". I have in mind Chin Ching-mai's novel, *The Song of Ouyang Hai*, which I described above.

The first signs of dissatisfaction with it appeared in August 1966, a period of debauchery on the part of the hungweipings, who were being encouraged in every way to display "revolutionary" initiative. Having sacked the bookshops, and destroyed the personal libraries of various citizens by burning their books or turning them into pulp, the hungweipings were looking for an opportunity to find fault with *The Song of Ouyang Hai* as well, for it had been published before the "cultural revolution". The man who had had the bad luck of designing the book was the first victim.

The Chinese edition said that the design had been made by Chih Hui, which could be a pen-name or a first name only. However that may be, the hungweipings directed their fury at Chih Hui. He had divided the cover into two unequal parts, with the upper part, taking up about two-thirds, depicting a sculpture on Ouyang Hai's feat; it shows the hero, scot planted on the rails, pushing the rampant horse off the track, his face distorted with effort and turned towards the hurling train. The sculpture on the cover is presented in the colour of bronze, against the background of a flaming red banner, with only a little of the background in white. The lower third is black, with the name of the novel and the author's name inscribed in red.

In fact, the whole cover was true to the content and the official line, but the hungwcipings decided that it was "counter-revolutionary" because of the black colour.

They would break into the publishing house and scurry across the city in search of the artist, who was to "answer" for the black colour on the cover which was offensive for a "revolutionary" novel. Apprehensive readers who wanted to keep the book tore off the cover. I saw many copies of the novel without the cover in the hands of students and office workers who had come to attend the compulsory political classes.

In 1967, following some infighting among the groups, Tao Chu, the eminent sponsor of the novel, was "exposed" as a "counter-revolutionary double-dealer". A hysterical campaign was mounted in the press against Liu Shao-chi, the head of state. The changes of line and principle in China's political life came so thick and fast that the novel was "outdated" in something like six months. Let us recall, in this context, that according to Kuo Mo-jo, its main distinction was its great capacity, for it contained almost all the political lines and principles right up to 1963. Now they were becoming obsolete daily, not to say hourly.

The alarmed author tried to keep abreast of the fluid political situation, and began feverishly to rewrite the book. On May 22, 1967, the Chinese papers began to carry extracts from the revised manuscript in which the author abused Liu Shao-chi and his policy in every possible way. But these new publications were soon suspended, the author fell silent, for the corrections had apparently done him no good. He had now to pay for the erstwhile sponsorship of Tao Chu by being in disgrace with the new authorities.

On February 17, 1968, Jean Vincent, France Presse correspondent in Peking, reported the appearance of tatzupaos criticising *The Song of Ouyang Hai*. That was as low as anyone could fall in Maoist China, the "epochal" work had burst like a soap bubble in the midst of the bloody internecine strife and squabbles into which the Maoist "cultural revolution" had plunged the country.

XI. CANNED CULTURE

CLASSICS OVERTHROWN, DRIVE AGAINST THE STAGE, DOWN WITH SHAKESPEARE AND BALZAC! ANTI-SOVIET DOUGH. "INSPIRATION—A BOURGEOIS SURVIVAL".

In the "cultural revolution" period, the Maoist leadership's cultural policy was designed to isolate the Chinese from the rest of the world, above all, from the achievements of the human mind and the treasure-house of world culture. The Maoists were terrified of the influence that the living example of the socialist countries could exert, and so vented their hatred on Soviet culture, a vehicle of humanistic traditions and an embodiment of vibrant progressive thought which looks to the future.

If an isolated society with a despotic regime and a low living standard was to be set up, the people's requirements had to be deliberately pushed down to rock-bottom. The best way to do this, the Maoists believed, was to deprive the Chinese people of any spiritual nutriment. Accordingly, their press started a demagogic campaign against the classical heritage and the achievements of the human genius. The true mainsprings behind the campaign—the urge to isolate China and to lock up the Chinese people in a hermetically sealed can—were thoroughly concealed, with vulgar sociological slogans being put forward as the ostensible arguments. The drive against world culture was started on a broad scale a few years before the massive "cultural revolution" movement. Articles by the Chinese wreckers of culture were a bitter pill for those who had the Chinese people's destinies close at heart. Every blow dealt at some classic of the arts meant that the Chinese were being deprived of access to his works. Therein lay the tragedy of the

situation: Shakespeare, Debussy or Louis Aragon could not suffer from the Maoists' slanders—these men were outside their reach, but ordinary Chinese were instantly deprived of essential cultural nutriment, and with the advance of the Maoist campaign less and less of world culture was available to the people. Their life on short rations in harsh everyday conditions was supplemented with spiritual starvation.

The Maoists' publicly proclaimed cultural nihilism was at its height in early 1966, when I came to China. Let us recall that in preparing the hungweiping movement as the main shock force of the "cultural revolution", the Maoists saw to it that Chinese young people were "safeguarded" from the "corrupt" influence of the world humanistic culture. In August 1964, Chao Li, a Maoist critic, wrote quite openly, making no bones about his purposes and intentions: "Bourgeois ideology of every shade absorbed by European bourgeois literature, including the ideology which at one time, at a definite historical period, had a progressive part to play, be it ideas of emancipating the individual and of personal happiness, extolled by the humanist writers of the Renaissance (from Boccaccio to Shakespeare), be it the ideas of individual protest preached by writers of active romanticism and critical realism in the 19th century (from Byron to Romain Rolland) or of reformism (from Hugo to Bernard Shaw), right up to Tolstoy's 'nonresistance to evil by force'—all of these are directly antithetical to the proletarian collectivist ideology in the light of the class struggle.... If we fail to subject to sharp criticism the various stripes of non-proletarian ideology in the literary writings of the foreign classics and allow them to spread among our readers, they will inevitably exert a negative influence and slow down our cause of socialist, communist ideological education. Indeed, judging from the responses of some young students and readers, they have already been exerting such an influence."¹

Behind a barrage of talk about "collectivism" and "proletarian revolutionary spirit", the Maoists banned and withdrew from circulation the European literature of the 19th century as being especially harmful for the "new order" to be set up in China. It is once again interesting to note that these purposes were not even concealed but openly declared. The journal *Wenyipao* (1964, No. 4) wrote: "The works of critical realism in the main reflect and extol the bourgeois ideology of indi-

¹ *Kwangming jihpao*, August 9, 1964.

dualism and humanism and in content they all describe, almost without exception, how the main character has succeeded in securing personal happiness by means of individual struggle. This way was travelled, for instance, by Julien from Stendhal's *Red and Black*, Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, Rolland's Jean Christophe and other leading characters. From our standpoint their purposes in human life and their way in life were petty and insignificant. None of them ever reached their goal. Julien was plunged into the depth of the contradictions of a split personality and in order to be rid of this contradiction was forced to choose a path leading to destruction. Anna Karenina committed suicide in a state of despair. Jean Christophe, for his part, no longer fought against the social "evil and injustice" in his later years, and his music became increasingly pacific, being filled with religious tenor. His end was nothing but tragic. None of these characters ever drew on the toiling people for wisdom and strength; in addition, most of them took a scornful and arrogant attitude to the broad masses. Works of this kind, while they do expose the feudal aristocracy and bourgeois, cannot show the reader the right way. The individualistic purposes of human life and the way of individual struggle which they extol are even more incompatible with the proletarian revolutionary spirit of collectivism."

In 1963, Chiang Ching, Mao's wife, became very active in the sphere of Chinese culture. She started a drive against the Chinese classical stage. The "revolutionisation" of the theatre began with the expulsion from the stage of plays dealing with the "supernatural". Then came Shakespeare's turn for having "dared" introduce witches in his tragedy *Macbeth*. One critic ventured the cautious observation that that was an "aesthetic method", a "piccc of entertainment". The Maoist Ssuma Chang-ying responded with an article entitled "How to Treat Superstition in Shakespeare's Plays". He wrote: "Of course, from the standpoint of the main theme and subject, the evil spirits and sorcery do not amount to the 'main thing' in the play. The idea of *Macbeth* is Macbeth's exposure.... But here is the point: who is to punish the criminal? In his *Macbeth*, Shakespeare gives the wrong answer. He has failed to explain the truth of history: social forces must put an end to the tyrant's rule. By contrast, he has excessively depicted the role of "celestial chastisement"... While the evil spirits, superstition and sorcery have not entirely dislodged the rest of the 'main

¹ *Kwangming jihpao*, August 9, 1964.

content' in *Macbeth*, they have still become the main content of the principal scenes of the play.... And when some say that they are not 'the main thing' in the play, but a 'piece of entertainment', that does not accord with the facts. To assert this in effect means obscuring the negative aspects of *Macbeth* as a play and preventing us to comprehend it critically."

And here is what the same author says about Shakespeare's sonnets: "From the few extant historical materials, we know that Shakespeare was religious while his relatives (including Dr. John Kerr, his son-in-law) were also religious. That is why although there is some fine verse issuing a challenge to destiny in his essentially autobiographical collection of sonnets, they also express superstition and belief in predestination (Sonnets 14, 15, 26, 60, 98, 107). Belief in the stars, fortune-telling, sorcery, belief in the devil and the soul are all expression of a superstitious faith in predestination. In his sonnets Shakespeare repeatedly speaks about all this, and we cannot ignore the facts."

The Western press censured the Maoists' vulgarity and nihilism. There was a curious polemic between the Chinese press and *The Christian Science Monitor* about Shakespeare. On July 20, 1965, *The Christian Science Monitor* carried an article entitled "The Threat of Shakespeare". The author presented a very simple scheme: Shakespeare was being taken to task in the PRC, consequently he was dangerous. Fear of Shakespeare, according to the American, was due to the fact that his plays were a balsam of common sense which tended to damp down the revolutionary fever. (The American author was certainly perspicacious: within a year, China was indeed plunged into the "fever" of the Maoist "cultural revolution".)

On October 26, 1965 *Kwangming jihpao* responded with an abusive rebuff to the jocular item in the US newspaper by carrying Chou Hung's article entitled "Shakespeare and *The Christian Science Monitor*". Chou Hung approached the American's feuilleton in all seriousness and proceeded to "whitewash" Shakespeare in his own way by informing his readers that in all of Shakespeare's works China was mentioned only twice, and that in metaphors, so that Shakespeare himself was not involved in anything anti-Chinese. Chou Hung then went on to set out the historical substantiation for a reappraisal of his works. He declared the Chinese principle of "taking the good and rejecting the bad" in any legacy to be the "universal law of cultural development". He wrote: "This is a universal law of the attitude to any cultural legacy in the de-

velopment of culture, although the criteria of the good and the bad have been different. Let us recall, by way of example, the epoch of the Renaissance in Europe. In that period, the ancient culture of Greece and Rome was extolled in every way, but that was not a revival of the whole but only an extraction of what was necessary for one's own development. If that is your approach to the cultural legacy of an exploiting class, like yours, does not the Chinese people, now creating an unparalleled socialist culture, have the absolutely lawful right to approach with strict analysis in the spirit of the 'take the good and reject the bad' principle to the foreign cultural legacy, including Shakespeare, who is undoubtedly a part of the system of bourgeois ideology?"

Having justified himself in this way by nailing Shakespeare's "bourgeois character" and bringing out the "unparalleled novelty" of culture in the PRC, Chou Hung goes over to the offensive: "Messrs. bourgeois, we respectfully advise you not to mention Shakespeare. Not to mention—that is all—otherwise your stagnation and degeneration will become obvious. Shakespeare and you yourselves are at different poles of the epoch of capitalism. For us who are building socialism he is a grain in the historical legacy from which our radiant reality has advanced inconceivably far ahead. But for you, those who are degenerating, even the light of the earlier bourgeois humanism still has the power of exposure. The article in *The Christian Science Monitor* claims that Shakespeare is the medicine of common sense and that very few people who have read his works have found themselves unable to escape from dogmatic thinking remote from reality. If that is truly so, we regret that you belong to these few. Because although you have written much about Shakespeare and have staged many of his plays, that is, in other words, although you take his medicine of common sense in considerable doses, it has not induced you to abandon the wild vision of dominating the world and fighting against the Chinese people and the peoples of the whole world.... Shakespeare will not save you."

It was the description of human emotions in European classical literature that most irritated the Maoists, for their purpose was to foster in China a breed of men and women who would hold sacred nothing but the will of the "leader". While the curses hurled at romantic love could somehow be explained by a hypertrophied purism or China's need to reduce its birth rate, that is, on pragmatic grounds, the curses hurled at parental feelings could be seen only as a cynical preparation

for corrupting the young generation who were to make short shrift of their elders. Thus, behind a cover of empty talk about Balzac's "bourgeois character", the Maoists put the brand of damnation on *Le Père Goriot*, which was very popular in China. The Maoist Lo Lin wrote the following about Balzac's novel in an article entitled "The Essence of Old Goriot's Paternal Love": "The author satirically exposed with unparalleled power the greed and abomination of the French financial aristocracy but through the propaganda of so-called abstract parental love he embellished this representative of the bourgeois and sang the praises of the reactionary theory of humanity. Balzac ...wasted many pages deliberately and thoroughly to describe his parental love, extolling him again and again as a 'representative of parental love', 'a real father', etc. But from our standpoint the parental love of a shopkeeper and profiteer is no more than a trifling feeling, a reflection in the sphere of emotion of the bourgeois principle of life and personal gain, and it bears a deep imprint of the bourgeois brand. Indeed, it may be said outwardly that for the sake of his daughters Father Goriot has sacrificed the whole of himself. But this sacrifice of Goriot's ... had two perfectly clear purposes: to satisfy the bourgeois vanity and to make a kind of capital investment.... His love for his daughters is exchanged for his daughters' love of him." At the end of the article, the author declares: "It is altogether reactionary on the part of some people to depict paternal love as a feeling inherent in the whole of mankind."¹

The young generation of Maoists was being groomed to riot on orders from on high and this required that they should be blind and pliant tools of another's will instead of conscious and independently thinking men. This task was reflected in the Maoist literary criticism, always utilitarian and narrowly pragmatic, in the drive against Byron's characters and the whole of Byron's works, also popular in China, especially among the young. The Maoists Yuan Ko-kia resolutely condemned Byron precisely for the spontaneous rebellion of his characters: "Byron's characters present a complex problem when it comes to analysing the aesthetic image. But all of them are in the main individualistic heroes; all of them in one way or another express Byron's own ideas.... The Byronic character today is a negative image. As for that part of Byron's ideology which is still meaningful today, namely, the call on the peoples

to resist foreign aggression, the distinction between just and unjust wars, the critique of bourgeois society, etc., this too contains limitations and cannot be in any sense credited to the Byronic type."¹

In 1965, the Chinese critics began to say that the campaign against the classical heritage was directly connected with the "socialist revolution in the sphere of culture". (At the time the Maoists were not yet using the term "cultural revolution".) Thus, attacking Stendhal's *Red and Black*, a very popular novel among the Chinese young people, critic Chao Lung-jang exposed Julien as follows: "The content of Julien's world outlook is a tireless craving for enrichment, a personal ambitious urge for a career, a corrupt striving for pleasure—with bourgeois individualism at the heart of it all." Julien's employment by the "extremely reactionary aristocrats" is condemned by the critic as "a way of capitulation to reaction". Julien's love is also dirty. "The love of Julien and Mathilde is an embodiment of the corrupt bourgeois view of love.... It is staggering moral degradation, lewdness, and shamelessness." Chao's overall conclusion amounts to a verdict upon Julien: "Julien's whole life is the life of a bourgeois individualist and ambitious careerist. Julien's death is the death of a failure, an adventurer, and carries within it no social protest." The final paragraph of the article says: "We must not be inspired by Stendhal's works in building a beautiful life!... He died long ago and today we have no claims on Stendhal. We are essentially people taking different ways. But we must separate ourselves from him ideologically.... In order to carry the socialist revolution in the sphere of culture to the end, and to make the superstructure give even better service to the socialist basis, there is need consistently to criticise the bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, individualistic, hedonistic, corrupt and putrid ideology of bourgeois literary works like *Red and Black*."²

The nihilistic rejection of the world's classical heritage has become a practical policy for the Maoists expressed in the burning of books, the closure of libraries, and the winding up of publication in literature and the arts. The Chinese press continued to glorify the "cultural revolution" in the course of which world culture gradually disappeared from the horizon of Chinese society, becoming an inaccessible and forbidden fruit

¹ Kwangming jihpao, August 16, 1964.

¹ Kwangming jihpao, July 12, 1964.

² Kwangming jihpao, July 25, 1965.

for millions upon millions of Chinese. Here is, for instance, one of the many Maoist declarations: "The great proletarian cultural revolution has fully embodied the whole system of communist ideology, raising its voice for the final abolition of exploitation and all exploiting classes. It is the greatest revolution in the history of mankind's literature and art. Throughout this history, the exploiting classes carried out numerous movements in literature and art, producing a great host of works in literature and art, spawning as many 'heroes' as there are hairs on a buffalo skin. The heralds of the exploiting classes ceaselessly extolled these heroes, claiming that they were 'glorious and immortal'. But if one pages through all the famous of the classics in the literature and art of the exploiting classes without exception, we find that they have never or in any way touched the system of exploitation itself! Let them all wave their flags of different colours, this does nothing to change their essence, which is to cover up in every way the bloody system of class exploitation and class oppression, to spread the landowner and bourgeois ideology and to serve the reactionary domination of the landowners and the bourgeoisie.

"Take the bourgeois Renaissance in Europe in the 16th century, the 'Enlightenment' and 'critical realism' of the 18-19th centuries, and you will find that for a long time they were presented as 'unsurpassed summits' by the traitor, intriguer and strikebreaker Liu Shao-chi and his representatives in the sphere of culture, the 'four thugs' of the Chou Yang type [meaning, apart from Chou Yang, also Hsia Yan, Tien Han, Yang Hun-sheng—A. Zh.]. Indeed, the slogans of 'humanism' and 'liberty, equality and brotherhood' put forward by the bourgeoisie ultimately served as ideological preparation for the bourgeois take-over of political power and the establishment of its domination. The famous works of that epoch—*Pantagruel and Gargantua* (Rabelais) and *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (Defoe) depict heroes of that very type. There is the 'giant' Gargantua who says that 'anyone can get rich and have a pile of money and live freely as one wishes', which is the extreme of bourgeois egoism, wilfulness and craving for pleasure. The so-called civiliser of the desert island, Robinson, is a forerunner of the colonialists who imposed the Christian religion of bourgeois civilisation with fire and sword, traded in Negroes, captured desert islands and destroyed the native population. Robinson is an invader, pure and simple! As for the 'critical realism' of the epoch of the decline of capitalism, it was used to rescue the hopelessly

diseased capitalist system. The 'critique' of these bourgeois writers stemmed from profound sympathy for the rotten and moribund bourgeoisie, for they indicated the sores of capitalist society in the hope of finding the means to cure it of these sores. The works of 'critical realism' either implant a passive and rotten pessimism or preach a humble patience and self-abdication of man; they either extol 'the kindness of the rich' and also some noble 'saviour of the world', or trade in empty and futile utopian illusions—all for the sake of reconciling the acute class contradictions and consolidating the bloody rule of the bourgeoisie.... What kind of 'unsurpassed summit' is that? That is a handful of dust and nothing more!"¹

The Maoists' attempts to "close up" mankind's culture may appear to be ridiculous, but they are a tragedy for the Chinese people itself. *Jenmin jihpao*, the mouthpiece of the government, carries directive materials, and life and practical work in the whole of China is structured in accordance with the slogans it proclaims. The Maoists' cultural nihilism is a calamity for the people deprived of access to books and knowledge.

The campaign against world culture specifically included a slanderous attack against Soviet culture, which for decades had been accepted in China, had had a large readership and had exerted an influence on Chinese opinion. It took an unparalleled campaign to spread the idea of national superiority and "revolutionary" exclusiveness, and to set up in China "a realm of Mao Tse-tung thought". In order to subordinate the Chinese people to their ambitious plans, to fan Mao's personality cult and deprive the Chinese of their sense of personal dignity and awareness of their value as individuals the Maoists had to overcome the influence of Soviet culture on the minds of the Chinese.

A campaign against Maxim Gorky, the founder of Soviet literature, began in 1963. The Maoist Li Hui-fan wrote:

"On the strength of the literary experience of his predecessors and his own, Gorky already saw the need to combine realism and romanticism in socialist literature. But Gorky was unable to take yet another step in depth in this matter, and scientifically to resolve it in a theoretical plane.... Comrade Mao Tse-tung first indicated clearly that our literature must be a combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism. He brilliantly applied revolutionary dialectics."²

¹*Jenmin jihpao*, December 21, 1970.

²*Wenhsueh pinglun* No. 2, 1963, p. 22.

The Chinese critic mentioned Gorky only as a pretext for burning incense to Mao Tse-tung. The political meaning of this absolutely groundless attack is quite clear. It is a curious fact, but Mao's "clear indications" have yet to be published and are known only from hearsay. An anniversary of the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky was similarly used for anti-Soviet attacks.

In the second half of 1963, the Chinese press launched upon direct slanderous attacks against the works of a number of Soviet poets and film producers. First came an article by Li Chih on the work of some young Soviet poets entitled "Are There Beatniks Only in America?"¹ The article condemns the work of the poets Kazakova, Evseyeva, Evtushenko, Voznesensky and Akhmatulina. The author says that the origins of their works lie in the poetry of Pasternak, Tsvetayeva and Akhmatova, whom he declares to be enemies of the revolution. The article also condemns those who wrote the prefaces to the volumes of their verse or articles in the press about them (Surkov, Orlov and Tvardovsky).

When No. 11 of *Wenyipao* appeared, it carried an article by Chang Kuan-nien, entitled "A Specimen of the Art of Modern Revisionism", about G. Chukhrai's films: *The Forty-First*, *Ballad of a Soldier* and *Clear Skies*. There is, in effect, no criticism of the films as such. The author attacks the policy of the CPSU on world peace, the struggle against the personality cult, etc. The Chinese critic says that Chukhrai's films are bad because they are a "reflection of the political urge for a peaceful evolution of socialism into capitalism". Thus, the films also provided a pretext for slanderous anti-Soviet attacks.

The attacks on Soviet literature and art increased from year to year. Someone called Lo Ta-kang produced an article entitled "Revolutionary Humanism and Counter-Revolutionary Humanism",² in which he makes a nationalistic contrast between Chinese and Soviet art. The authors make no effort to conceal the political undertones of such writings.

The new constructions produced by Chinese literary critics and theorists leave no room for the USSR or Soviet literature. They consider the concept of the history of world literature without Russian or Soviet literature, and with the 19th century, with its realism in the classics expunged from the history of literature. Of course, this epoch has been removed not only

¹*Wenyipao* No. 9, 1963.

²*Wenyipao* No. 5, 1964.

because realism, especially critical realism, has long since been declared dangerous in China, for it is capable of setting a bad example for all manner of "weeds", but also because with the 19th century it is possible to "delete from history" everything connected with classical Russian literature. The Maoists believe that there should be no Russian literature for the Chinese people even in theoretical terms. There are any number of demagogic attacks against Soviet literature in China today.

On January 19, 1968, *Jenmin jihpao* had an article by Fang Hsiu-wen (penname) entitled "Expose the Counter-Revolutionary Essence of the 'Humanism' Preached by Soviet Revisionists". The author had for an objective of his attack Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Upturned* and *The Fate of a Man*, Tvardovsky's *House by the Roadside*, Nikolayeva's *Battle on the Way*, Stadnyuk's *Men Are No Angels*, and Chengiz Aitmatov's *Mother's Field*. The author criticised the "Soviet revisionists" for publishing the works of these "reactionary scribblers" and also the works of Tsvetayeva, Bunin, Zoshchenko, Akhmatova, and Pasternak. About the books of Simonov and Bykov, the author brazenly declares that they have "whitewashed the Hitler fascists", while Ehrenburg and Yevtushenko are called the "bards of US imperialism", etc.

These nightmarish inventions are most concentrated in an article by someone named Pa Shan (probably a penname) entitled "Let us Tear Down the Fig Leaf from the Soviet Revisionists' Deceit."¹ He says that Sholokhov is the "founder of revisionism in Soviet literature" and his *Quiet Flows the Don*, a counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet work (sic!). He adds that Sholokhov is a "loyal slave of imperialism", Ehrenburg, a "diehard rightist", and Simonov, a "counter-revolutionary double-dealer". He calls the young poets starting out in Soviet literature a "pack of bourgeois intellectuals". He declares that modern Soviet literature and the stage are a "low-grade vulgarity".

Indeed, the Chinese critics fearlessly rush into the absurd. It is not worth while to argue against such accusations because they are altogether without reasonable arguments and merely testify to an impotent malice and hatred.

Let me quote a spokesman of a so-called mass organisation addressing a conference in Peking in June 1968. According to *Jenmin jihpao*, he said: "We have set up a brigade for criticising literature and art, we have taken up the critical weapon and

¹*Jenmin jihpao*, February 2, 1968.

have directed fire against the much-lauded 'great personalities' of the literature and art of Soviet revisionism: Sholokhov, Simonov and Ehrenburg. We have attacked their long and foul main works: *Quiet Flows the Don*, *Days and Nights*, and *The Thaw*. We have no abstruse theories. We have seen these 'great personalities' right through...."

In September 1969, the Chinese press front-paged articles containing wild slanders on the character and activity of Konstantin Stanislavsky, the well-known Soviet producer, actor and critic. One journal wrote: "Stanislavsky was a reactionary 'authority' of bourgeois art in the tsarist period, but for a long time the Soviet revisionists styled him as a 'Marxist'. Stanislavsky's 'system' constitutes the theoretical basis for the literature and art of modern revisionism." Then follows a biased exposition of his biography: "Stanislavsky was a reactionary all his life. He panicked during the Russian Revolution of 1905, and fled to Germany with a repertory of plays extolling the tsar and aristocracy. He was applauded and received in audience by the German Kaiser Wilhelm II. After the Great October Revolution Stanislavsky admitted that he was again at a 'dead end', that he 'had need to look around'. Together with a stage troupe he set out for the USA, where he communed intimately with the imperialists. He whined about the lost 'peaceful' days of tsarism, cursed the revolution for 'war, hunger, world disaster, mutual misunderstanding and hatred'.... His theory of the stage was a product of the reactionary policy of the tsarist government, which made use of culture to dull the people's minds."

In the article, Stanislavsky's system is called "obscurantism", and then an "instrument of fighting against Marxism-Leninism, and for a restoration of capitalism". The author states with bitterness: "This system has spread from the Soviet Union to China, now dominating the stage and screen public. Directors and actors read Stanislavsky with reverence, as the Bible. These gentlemen went wild at the slightest criticism of Stanislavsky, as if an attempt was being made on the graves of their ancestors." The proof of Stanislavsky's "bourgeois" character is a peculiar one: "From 1877 to 1928 he appeared in 106 roles, all of these being tsarist generals, aristocrats, bourgeois and urban people. The so-called principle of 'starting from oneself' in Stanislavsky's system means starting from the political interests and aesthetic principles of the bourgeoisie. His 'self-expression' is an expression and praise of the 'bourgeois ego'."

The campaign against Russian and Soviet culture in China is inseparable from the persecution of Chinese intellectuals, who find themselves in a desperate situation.

In 1973, the Maoists tried to revive cultural life in the country in some way. Of course, the quality of any work is regarded from only one aspect: the extent to which it meets the demands of Mao's thought. Critics in China do not ask themselves whether a novel tells the truth and whether it has any aesthetic features. The main thing that seriously worries the Chinese press is whether a novelist is true to Mao's thought.

It may be assumed that some Chinese writers began to abandon the idea of writing standard made-to-order novels under the pretext of lacking inspiration. Otherwise, why did the Chinese press begin an offensive in 1973 on the very idea of inspiration in literary work? Once the "down with inspiration" slogan has been put forward, the argument is ready-made: "The Russian bourgeois critic Belinsky openly (sic!) preached that inspiration was the source of any creative work.... But if articles originate in idle living-rooms ... why waste time on immersion in life and the transformation of ideology?"¹

Let us recall that according to Mao thought the main component part of "transforming ideology" among the Chinese intellectuals is assignment to clean public lavatories and sewers, that is, something which the Maoists believe to be "more active". The Maoists have done their utmost to justify the slander against the Soviet literature and its traditions, which stem from the revolutionary democrats of the 19th century—Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov, among others.

While this campaign has done nothing to harm Soviet literature itself, it is evidence of continued repression in China, and gives an idea of the stagnant and stuffy social atmosphere of Mao's personality cult and the military-bureaucratic dictatorship.

¹ *Jenmin jihpao*, May 23, 1973.

XII. THE LAST DAYS

MY TEACHER'S LOT. HUNGWEIPING INDULGES IN CONFIDENCES.
PEKING PARTY COMMITTEE BLOCKED. HUNGWEIPINGS IN ARMY
UNIFORM. I GO HOME

I want to tell what happened to Professor Kuo. At our last sessions in early July, he was nervous and looked tired. He kept coming late, but was always willing to answer all my questions, however long it took. My futao Ma took especial pains in summarising what was being said at some of our sessions.

At the end of July, Ma handed me a list of extracts from old books which I was to read during the holidays. The list was drawn up in Professor Kuo's hand.

In August I met Kuo by the office building quite unexpectedly. His light blue coat was unbuttoned and he was walking along at the slow and very dignified gait which is typical of Chinese intellectuals and which set him apart from the crowd of students. In measured tones he told me what I was to read and how.

In September I asked Ma when our studies would be resumed.

"Your studies will be resumed, but teacher Kuo will not be there," Ma said. "He has not been allowed to teach any more."

"What is his fault?" I asked, trying to be as calm as possible.

"The studies he conducted with you had nothing in common with Mao Tse-tung thought."

"But Mao Tse-tung has never said anything about my subject," I objected.

"Does it matter that he has said nothing directly? We now have the main thing: to start in everything from Mao Tse-tung thought and never to forget about it. Kuo spent two, three and even four hours teaching you, and never once recalled Chairman Mao!"

"Are you telling me this, or have you already told everyone?"

"I have said as much at a faculty meeting," Ma replied.

"How could you have done that? After all, he had been your teacher as well. You spent three or four years studying with him, didn't you?" I said with indignation.

"It was four," Ma said in some confusion. I still had the impression that he was not too proud of what he had done.

Ma finally said that he would get me another teacher.

A few days later I saw Professor Kuo once again. His pale face was set in resolution, and he was walking fast towards the stadium where another hungweiping rally was seething. By his side was a girl wearing a red hungweiping armband. This meant that Professor Kuo was now one of the "freaks and monsters". It is true that for the time being his arms were not being twisted.

I felt that I had the right to know the charges against my teacher. I broke my promise not to read any tatzupaos and went to the "Lane of Freaks and Monsters", lined on either side with poles holding up matting on which the students put up their tatzupaos to expose the "freaks and monsters" in their departments.

Every "freak and monster" had a tatzupao to himself. In the left-hand corner was a cartoon to make the "freak" really look like one, and each had a red cross on it to strike fear into their hearts. On the right-hand side was the family name of the condemned man written in large black characters. At the bottom was his biography, written in minute characters, without a single kind word, and full of abuse, a black creature from head to foot, from birth to condemnation. Most of these "monsters" were Communists and about each it was said that he had "insinuated himself into the Party in the year...", even if the year fell in the Chiang Kai-shek period, when a man risked his life by joining the CPC.

More than 40 men had been convicted at the philological department, among them the Dean and his deputies—Professors Kuo and Liu—all the Party activists, and Huang Yao-mien, an old man, well-known for his research into ancient literature. Throughout the month of September

the number of biographies in the tatzupaos grew. The machine which blackened the intelligentsia had been started in June and was still going full blast. At first, the number of "freaks and monsters" at the University came to about 150, then the number rose to 180 and finally topped 200. And that only in one higher school. The "cultural revolution" threatened every educated person with humiliation and abuse.

I read two accusatory articles about men I knew. Deputy-Dean of the philological department Liu, an old Party member, was being hypocritically accused of cowardice and double-dealing. It was claimed that he has shown cowardice during the civil war by "hiding" in Party establishments. He was called a double-dealer because he had "fought against the red banner while covering up with the red banner". As Party organiser of the department at the University, he had practised "monarchism" and "issued orders", "blindly fulfilling the instructions of those vested with power, who were within the Party and moved along the capitalist way", stubbornly pursuing the "bourgeois counter-revolutionary line of the former Peking City Party Committee and the Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee". Liu was regarded as being especially dangerous because during the three months of the "cultural revolution" he had refused to admit his guilt, had denied all his mistakes, refused to "bow his head before the revolutionary masses" and had "falsely" sworn loyalty to Mao Tse-tung. He was styled a "big freak and big monster" and a "sworn counter-revolutionary".

Professor Kuo's biography was written in accordance with the same denigrating scheme. Kuo had joined the Party a relatively short time ago, in 1960, which was why he was accused of being a careerist. He had carried on much social work, and apart from his duties of Deputy-Dean of the department, had been an editor of *Kwangming jihpao's* "Literary Heritage" department, and also on the editorial board of a linguistic series put out by Education Publishers. All of this was ground for charges of ambition and thirst for power. Kuo was also exposed for his "criminal ties" with Teng To.

The tatzupao said that Teng To had shaken hands with him in public and said: "I know your name by your articles." This criminal connection had allegedly been established five years earlier when the Second Secretary of the Peking City Party Committee visited the Pedagogical University, to acquaint himself with its life and the leading workers of the University. At the philological department, Cheng, the Party organiser of

the University, introduced him to the Dean of the department and to both of his deputies.

It was not surprising that Teng To had said that to Professor Kuo, for Teng To was a well-read man, and Kuo an outstanding scientist, and the author of numerous scientific articles on Chinese philology. But five years later, the act of shaking hands with Teng To became ground for the charge that Kuo was one of the "black band".

The second piece of evidence against Kuo was that when endorsing the list of editors for "Literary Heritage" a few years earlier, Teng To had discussed every name in detail but when he came to Kuo's name he had confined himself to this remark: "I know this name."

Hence the peremptory conclusion: "His personal ties resulted in a criminal ideological proximity between the big Rightist monster and freak Kuo with the villain Teng To."

Finally, came the third and heaviest piece of evidence: "During a search of Kuo's flat a copy of Teng To's book *Evening Conversations in Yenshan* was discovered. Kuo admitted that he had bought the book for his own money and read it."

I last saw Professor Kuo in mid-September. He was walking alone along a lane at the University unhurried as usual and wearing his light blue coat. He was haggard and pale and some sorrowful lines had appeared at the corners of his mouth. I was glad to know that he had weathered the most terrible ordeal, but I was not sure how he would behave at this unexpected meeting with me, and so simply nodded to him. He stopped at once and spoke to me, wanting to know about my plans and studies. Kuo was completely at ease and polite, but I realised that it took a great effort on his part to appear at ease in the circumstances, even for a man of exceptional courage and determination. Passers-by stopped and stared at us with genuine amazement: a "cultural revolution" was on in the country, and any imprudent step could result in a man's downfall. But here was Professor Kuo, branded and convicted, publicly and with his usual dignity talking to a foreigner, and a Soviet foreigner at that! I looked with much respect at this man who had remained unbowed.

The new academic year had officially begun but following Professor Kuo's conviction I had no one to study with.

"I've been lucky," my Vietnamese neighbour told me. "I had three teachers, and only one had been condemned, the two others are carrying on their studies with me. You will find

it hard to get another teacher: no one is now willing to work with foreigners."

On September 20, all the Soviet students and trainees—five in all—were summoned to the Embassy and informed that the Chinese government had decided to make a break in classes for its own students, so that the foreign students and trainees would have to go home within the next fortnight. We were invited to prepare for departure.

But upon my return to the Pedagogical University I had a visit from Hsui of the Office who informed me that the University would organise my studies from September 23. In effect, on the appointed day Ma introduced me to my new teacher Han.

This was a tall young man of about 29 with a pale, sick-looking face. He had graduated from Fudan University in Shanghai in 1959 and had since then presented a special course in ancient Chinese prose at Peking Pedagogical University. I said that in my ignorance I had no knowledge of his work.

"Fortunately, I have published only two or three insignificant items. After all, every scientific worker must account to the masses for everything he had published since Liberation," Han told me in a colourless voice. "One must admit one's mistakes, explain one's crimes and seek forgiveness for what one had done. My items were also erroneous."

"What did you write about?"

"I wrote about socialist realism in literature. My items were very erroneous. I have already accounted for them."

"In that case, you have been truly fortunate," I remarked.

Han was painstaking in his teaching, but I could not get much out of him, because his views of literature were much narrower than those of Professor Kuo, and in erudition the two men were poles apart. In Ma's presence he punctuated his lecture with quotations and sayings from Mao Tse-tung, which had nothing to do with the subject. One day we were left alone, because under the "cultural revolution", the much-famed Chinese precision of organisation had been lost and Ma had been sent out on some assignment. Han really got going and spoke about literature with rapture, with much greater profundity and without the ubiquitous quotations.

I found myself in a totally inexplicable situation: the University appeared to be ignorant of the Ministry's decision to send the foreigners home.

On the eve of October 1—the PRC's national holiday—I was warned that I was to expect a visit from Tung after noonday.

Once an ordinary Office worker, Tung had been among the first to put on the red hungweiping armband. He had moved on and had established himself as a hungweiping activist at the Office.

Upon entering, Tung first spoke in somewhat uncertain tones:

"At present, a great proletarian cultural revolution is on in this country. Do you have any complaints? Have you yourself suffered in any way?"

"No, I myself have not suffered, but I do have some complaints."

"Well, let us have them, please."

At this point Tung breathed a sigh of relief. He had feared an encounter with a person embittered by beatings. That was an ordeal I personally had escaped.

I gave the hungweiping tea, and as he drank slowly from his cup, he asked me to tell him about my dissatisfactions. I said that my plan of work had not been fulfilled because of the "cultural revolution", that the library had been closed down, that my scientific tutor had been replaced, etc.

Tung accepted my complaints as being self-evident. He urged me to try to "understand" that a "cultural revolution" was in progress in the PRC, and so to forget about my complaints. He then asked me:

"What is your attitude to the political events in China?"

I said that I saw the "cultural revolution" as the PRC's domestic affair, but did not approve of it in any way.

"The Chinese people think differently! The hungweipings are the best representatives of the Chinese people!" Tung declared.

"I don't think so!"

We were at a dead end.

"What I personally don't like at all is that the bookshops have been closed and all the classical literature has been withdrawn from the shelves," I said to keep the conversation going.

Tung replied in a kind of apologetic tone, which was somewhat unexpected, considering the goings-on around us:

"There are many very young, immature men among the hungweipings. They have been closing down the bookshops out of revolutionary enthusiasm. But this will pass and things will settle down. The system of popular education will be

restructured. Mao Tse-tung thought will penetrate everywhere."

He spoke at length, but the most important thing had been said: Tung did not approve of the hungweiping actions one hundred per cent. The generation of 30-year-old men was still capable of taking a more conscious approach to the destiny of culture in their country, even if they were incapable of defending it.

Tung then delivered a long speech in the spirit of the official instructions for the holiday. Foreigners were told that cultural monuments had been destroyed because of the "revolutionary enthusiasm" of the masses. Christian churches desecrated because of the "freedom" to combat religion, etc.

"What else is it that you don't like in the cultural revolution movement?" Tung kept asking me insistently.

I said that I had been outraged by the blockade of the Soviet embassy and the rude and abusive inscriptions.

"Our young comrades are not well versed in diplomatic usages and international relations," the hungweiping said. "But they must not be deprived of their right to express their feelings."

Both he and I tried to avoid any sharp words, and while the official part of our conversation was clearly over, Tung was not preparing to go. I realised that he was staying out of curiosity. Of course, he had been sent on an official assignment, but besides that he wanted to find out as much as possible for himself at first hand, and he began to ask me in detail about life in the USSR, the economic reform, prices, wages, housing, etc.

Finally, he began to go over the whole history of Soviet-Chinese relations, and asked my opinion about all the accusations issued by official Chinese propaganda.

Many Chinese and even some activists of the "cultural revolution", like Tung, had apparently no clear idea of the reasons behind the rupture of friendly Soviet-Chinese relations. When meeting Soviet people—a rare occasion—they were naturally curious to hear out the other side. In the 1950s, the Soviet Union had helped China to build and start over 250 industrial projects, which provided jobs for hundreds of thousands of workers, technicians and engineers. The scale of co-operation was unprecedented in the history of mankind. But in 1961, under pressure from the Mao group, the Chinese side refused to continue this co-operation. Its fold-up had a grave effect on China's economy. But the Maoists regarded their own political

domination as being much more important than the country's normal economic development. They outdid themselves in slanders in order to denigrate Soviet assistance and the CPSU's internationalist policy in the Chinese people's eyes, but this was a hard task. All over China one saw the stacks of the enterprises built in the years of friendship, their products being turned out in accordance with Soviet technological specifications and with Soviet equipment. In addition, the "great leap forward" and the "people's communes" gamble had resulted in ruin and stagnation. Everyone with a head on his shoulders naturally tended to compare the facts despite the hysterical anti-Soviet howls of the Maoist press.

"Why did the Soviet specialists leave China? Why were they pulled out?" Tung inquired.

"Because you ignored them," I said. "You started your 'great leap forward', to which our specialists objected. It is insane to pursue such a policy in a socialist country. You began to call us 'conservatives', to maltreat us in every way, and the specialists had to go."

When Tung heard the word "conservative", he nodded and did not object.

"Besides, weren't our specialists in the PRC incited to come out against Soviet policy?" I continued.

"And why did the USSR stop its assistance to China? Isn't that a betrayal?"

"Because you yourselves demanded an end to it. You put forward your new general line which cut across earlier CPC decisions. You yourselves started a political fight against the USSR. Isn't that so?"

"Because of the termination of Soviet assistance China was starving!" Tung came up with Chinese propaganda's trump card and its main instrument in injecting anti-Sovietism into the minds of the Chinese.

"That's not true! The USSR helped you to build factories and plants. You yourselves handled the agriculture. The 'great leap forward' and the 'people's communes'—there you have the main reasons for the collapse of agriculture and starvation in the country."

"We were simultaneously hit by natural disasters."

"Of course, drought and floods are a terrible thing, but they have never hit the whole of China, while the 'people's communes' undermined the country as a whole all at once."

"The 'people's communes' will still show their mettle. In the past two years the situation had improved."

"Only the name of these communes remains. You have repeatedly reorganised them."

"I believe that the cause lay in the natural disasters," Tung said, no longer blaming the USSR.

"You yourselves like to say and write that 'politics stands first'. I agree with this, you starved because of a mistaken economic policy, and the natural calamities were secondary."

Tung evaded an answer, and I was finally convinced that he was interested in obtaining my opinion, and not in the discussion itself, that he was asking me for his own sake.

There were some moments of silence.

"Perhaps, there is something else you do not understand in the cultural revolution?" Tung asked.

"There is a great deal I don't understand," I said. "The movement itself, I think, is much broader than the concept of culture. Another thing I don't understand is whether this movement is spontaneous or planned, and whether it has any ultimate goals."

Tung smiled and spoke for my edification:

"The cultural revolution is a creative act on the part of the masses, but it has been developing in the spirit of the predestinations of our greatest teacher, Chairman Mao. That is why the spontaneous energy of the masses is harmoniously combined with his brilliant provisions. You are unable to understand this in the light of your own ideology!" he concluded with a deprecatory smile.

He continued more seriously:

"The cultural revolution is going through several stages. The first is being implemented just now and consists in the overthrow of the black realm which has dominated the PRC for 17 years. In that period, the CPC has been in power, but those vested with authority within the Party marched along the capitalist way and prepared for a reconversion, a change of colour for our country and national betrayal. Much fighting remains to be done in order to crush the black forces. This task is now being successfully fulfilled."

"When do you think the first stage will be over?" I asked.

"I don't know exactly, but I think it will be over before the end of the year," Tung replied. "At our University the hungweipings have undertaken a socialist commitment to hold trials to mete out punishment to all the 'freaks and monsters' before January 1, 1967. I think that we shall cope with this, although there is much to be done. Then will come the second stage, when the main thing will be creative and educational work, I

mean, the spread of Mao Tse-tung thought across the country. Every man will live in the spirit of Mao Tse-tung thought, and every establishment will work in the spirit of Mao Tse-tung thought. We shall change the morals, customs and usages, we shall change education and training, we shall change the state agencies, and we shall advance new men. This will be a revolutionary change and a new, revolutionary order in China. Now this work is just beginning."

"How long will the second stage last?"

"It is hard to say. At first we thought that it would end by the beginning of the next academic year, by September 1967, but now, I'm afraid, we shall not cope: China is a big country and there is much work. I suppose that we shall finish it by January 1968."

"And what then? What are the prospects?" I asked.

"The cultural revolution is being carried out for the first time in the world, and China is blazing the way into the future of mankind. Nothing like it has ever happened in any country. No one can stop the triumphal advance of Mao Tse-tung thought! At present it is taking over China, and later it will spread across the whole world!"

"How long will that take?" I asked with a grin.

"Twenty years," Tung said and added firmly: "Within 20 years, Mao Tse-tung thought will have taken over the whole world. We shall spread it to the whole world!"

"In what way?"

"The revolutionary way," came the reply.

I recalled the Chinese placards set up at every turn of the road: "Prepare for disasters: hunger and war!"

On the morning of October 2, when the national holiday which required the observance of various rules of propriety was over, the hungweipings behaved as if they had been unleashed. The meetings began to roar again.

Sitting on a park bench one day, I listened to a frenzied and confused speech by an orator who sounded like a teenager. Now and again his voice broke into a whine. He was shouting: "Don't trust the Party functionaries! Let them answer before the revolutionary masses! Comrades, fight the enemies within the Party, the enemies around you. Let us render harmless the time-bombs around Chairman Mao! The traitors are hiding within the Party—death to the traitors! Death to the big and small traitors!"

The crowd raged. Some echoed every call of the speaker, some whistled, others shouted and stamped their feet.

"Long live the most, most, most beautifullest Red Sun, our great teacher, great leader, great commander and great helmsman, Chairman Mao! Glory, glory, glory!"

He repeated the cry of "glory" for some time, but his voice was drowned out in the wail. At this point a low baritone started to say in a business-like manner:

"The cultural revolution committee of our University is crawling with Party members who have insinuated themselves into it! They are malicious monarchists, conservatives, enemies of Mao Tse-tung! Revolutionary comrades! Down with the cultural revolution committee! Rebellion is justified!"

At this point something inconceivable occurred: the cries developed into wails, people were being trampled and beaten, and the human avalanche rushed past me, with shouts of "down!" and "let's disperse them!" heard amid the heavy breathing and the trample of running feet.

At lunch, I found out that the supporters of the committee had once again managed to defend it, though not without some effort. The "revolutionary minority", having suffered a reverse, organised a massive procession under the slogan: "We must start with the head!" In front of the library, one haranguing hungweiping was urging the crowd to "march against the city committee":

"The committee relies on the new city committee, led by Li Hsiue-feng! It is pursuing an opportunist line of sabotaging the cultural revolution! It is the duty of every revolutionary, fearless of difficulties and fearless of death, to overthrow Li Hsiue-feng, and to disperse the new Peking city committee!"

The new city Party committee, I thought, had managed to hold out for more than four months. Li Hsiue-feng had come to the Pedagogical University with Chiang Ching, so why had he fallen into disgrace?

"The new city committee is working hand in glove with the old one," shouted a girl, who had managed to take the rostrum. "They have been recruiting former functionaries and consulting at home with members of the old city committee! The new city committee is only called new, but it is essentially the same old black band. Down with Li Hsiue-feng! Down with the new city committee!"

The hungweipings, heated by the calls, left the University and entered the city in a column with the objective of breaking up the city Party committee of the Chinese capital.

The blockade of the city Party committee's building and the meetings around it went for days, and continued even after my

departure. The hungweipings still got their way, and Secretary of the Peking City Party Committee Li Hsiue-feng was soon removed, the second secretary to go within less than a year. An attempt was also made to break up the third city Party committee headed by Wu Te, but it was also re-established and Wu Te himself became a member of the Maoist "revolutionary committee" set up later. But by then I had left China.

I was walking past a string of hungweipings lined up for their morning exercises. Hundreds of boys and girls in green army uniform stood in detachment. Upon a signal from their commanders, they all brought up together to their faces their little red books of Mao Tse-tung sayings. The orders came in hoarse tones:

"Open page 32! Ready!"

The hungweipings stood motionless, to attention, with opened little red books in their right hands.

In a ringing voice the commander read the title of the section. This was repeated by the rest in chorus, with each word clearly chanted out.

The voices of the chanters were inexpressive, the faces solemn and glum: they were in the act of doing their morning service. Today, in front of the hungweiping line-up, alongside the young commanders, stood some older men in army uniform with stars on their caps, and armbands saying "political instructor".

Indeed, the secret aims were now becoming quite obvious: from behind the hungweipings the army, the Maoists' main trump card, was now coming to the fore. It was to put the finishing touches to the job the hungweipings themselves could not cope with.

From September on, the army had been issuing uniforms to the hungweipings. At first they were issued ill-assorted and second-hand uniforms from the warehouses. That is why the very first, merited hungweipings, the veterans of the movement, wore the much-washed and faded army uniforms, with some sporting only a tunic, some a pair of trousers, rarely anyone was fitted out in full fig.

Later on, the hungweipings were issued new green fabric from military stores and the September hungweipings were decked out in new army uniforms made to order. Almost everyone wore military caps, but in place of the army red star they had a guilt Mao against a red background. Rubber shoes were still the standard hungweiping footwear. The army is the

Maoists' main force and an army career is a most desirable in the country.

For one thing, the soldier always has his fill to eat, his food is guaranteed by the state, and this is a great deal in China where everyone still recalls starvation as a real personal threat. The soldier is clothed and has no need of coupons to redeem his clothes: the coupons are in short supply because there is need to ensure the export of cotton goods. Finally, upon leaving the army, a man automatically gets an administrative job, for the army is a school of personnel, and every army man stands out with his technical and even elementary education.

A well-supplied, well-uniformed and well-fed army has been subjected to thorough ideological grooming in the spirit of Mao's personality cult. Many functions of state administration have been handed over to the army. But there is no doubt that there is dissatisfaction in the Chinese army. Even the force of military discipline has not helped the Maoists to suppress the healthy socialist attitudes and alarm among honest men for the country's future.

The day of my departure was at hand. I was packing my books so as to take my things to the Embassy. Hsui and another official came into my room and declared quite unexpectedly:

"You are leaving of your own accord. The University has never raised the question of your departure before the expiry of your term. On the contrary, we have provided you with studies."

"Wait a minute, now!" I said indignantly. "A fortnight ago the Ministry of Higher Education insisted on the Soviet students and trainees leaving ahead of schedule. Members of the Embassy were specially called out and notified of this. This was done officially."

"We know nothing about this," the two men said. "You are leaving of your own accord. We shall not see you off or help you in any way."

"No matter, the Embassy will see to that."

I went to the University the following day to hand in my Chinese documents and at the entrance told the porter that this was my last visit.

At the foreigners' dining-room I was given a cordial send-off, but in the Office another attempt was made to convince me that the "expulsion had been invented by the Embassy".

I finished with my business, but to my surprise the Embassy car that was to pick me up had not yet arrived.

"You see how the revisionists are treating Soviet people!" one official kept driving home his point.

I did not stay to hear him out and, saying good-bye, started to walk along the central lane towards the gate.

There were thousands of people on the campus. The University hungweipings were receiving their fellows from other higher schools in the capital and in the provinces, who had come for an "exchange of experience". The provincial hungweipings crowded round the "most important" or "historical" tatzupaos, summarising them and listening to the explanations of the hungweiping guides. Finally, roughly a third of the crowd, slowly moving along the tatzupao-hung lane consisted of soldiers. They arrived at the University in squads and platoons, broke ranks at the gates and went on to obtain instructions from the hungweipings. The soldiers behaved with discretion: they looked and learned.

Ma alone came to see me off. On the way I asked him whether he really did not know about my return home ahead of schedule. He assured me that he had not.

At the gates, the business of the Embassy car was cleared up. The porter told me that it had come twice, but that he had sent it off on both occasions, not being aware that I was still there.

What was I to do? I decided to go by bus.

I emerged from the University gates for the last time. In front of me marched a column of hungweipings in brand new military uniforms, shirts over trousers. The commander was shouting in a hoarse voice:

"One, two, three!"

Truck loads of hungweipings were rolling past, for a "revolutionary operation" was being mounted round the city Party committee. Happily one bus stopped near the University gates and a group of hungweipings emerged. I waved to Ma and jumped in before the door closed. The bus took me to the centre.

My train was leaving that night. The Embassy bus taking us to the railway station was filled with men and women seeing us off. In the early twilight, the bus wended its way along the narrow streets of Peking, avoiding the broad avenues which could have been blocked by hungweiping processions.

Finally, we got to the station square and stopped. It was crowded with hungweipings, some standing, some sitting, and some lying down. There were thousands of them. Some had come to the capital to obtain experience in the "cultural revo-

lution", and some were returning home to implant Chairman Mao's "thought", the revolutionary way.

The bus had to make a detour along narrow dirty alley-ways to reach the luggage department. There was little time left and everyone pitched in to help us take our places. The five of us had two compartments to ourselves. The parting words were few.

The following day we were subjected to a customs inspection at the border. A Chinese customs man demanded that I showed him my books. I opened my cases.

"Where did you buy so many books?"

"I bought them in Peking before the 'cultural revolution'."

"The question of the books needs to be discussed," he said.

He took away some of the books and returned only in about two hours, before the train was about to leave.

"We have decided to return you the books out of respect for your specialty," he declared.

We were allowed to carry away with us the knowledge that had become prohibited for the citizens of the country itself, and this was considerable generosity, indeed.

The train started, carrying us beyond the boundaries of the "cultural revolution", and at this point I felt most keenly what a tragedy it was for the Chinese people.

AFTERWORD

I want to say a few words about this book of mine. An abridged magazine version was carried soon after the events by *Novy Mir* (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 1968). A response soon came from *Jenmin jihpao*. Its article contained abuse and personal attacks against myself, but did not contest a single fact. I was rebuked for seeing only the "shady sides", for "hobnobbing with unsound elements", etc. All of this went hand in hand with unseemly statements about the USSR.

The article in *Jenmin jihpao* was signed by a group calling itself the "cultural revolution committee of the Peking Pedagogical University". Their review showed that the Maoists were greatly irritated by the description of actual events. China is a closed country, and everything that happens there the Peking ruling élite seeks to keep secret, realising that things of that kind will not win them any laurels, but may well put them to shame.

Reviews of a French edition (Robert Laffont, Paris, 1968) and a German edition (Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1969) of my book appeared in many countries of the world. I was struck especially by one review. Its author, Philippe Constantin, is a Frenchman, and his review was carried by *Jeune Afrique*, but it leaves a strong impression of the Peking approach.

Chance would have it, that when the "cultural revolution" broke out I was at a student campus in Peking, the only foreigner from Europe. It pained me to see the brutal treatment meted out to the men who roomed in the same corridor

as I did, and the abuse showered upon Professor Kuo, who was my teacher. It is one thing to judge about events in some country from afar, and quite another to see at first hand what happens to people whom you know personally at home and at work. I wrote frankly about what I had seen. Philippe Constantin declared in his article: "One Russian went through this 'cultural revolution'. It is surprising to say that his response is not too far a cry from that of a French bourgeois in face of the 'university youth, who had abandoned their books, spat on the old men and ridiculed knowledge and science itself'.... He has seen everything but has understood nothing."

What then has the author in *Jeune Afrique* himself understood about the Chinese "cultural revolution"? He claims, on the strength of an "abundance of documents", to have produced an objective "analysis" of the meaning of the "cultural revolution". However, it is the meaning that he has not tried to discover. His claims of objectivity amount to an obedient repetition of the ABC of Chinese official propaganda. Take his slanderous statements about the Soviet Union's "revisionist line". Isn't that a direct echo of the Peking inventions? But that is not the only purpose of the editors of that magazine. *Jeune Afrique* contains the propaganda of Mao's personality in every item. Mao is called a "full personality", a "first-class strategist", and the "incontestable leader of people's China". They compare him with Trotsky—without realising the damaging force of this comparison—and declare him to be "without a doubt the greatest giant revolutionary situations have ever produced". These strains of the personality cult are only a short and imperceptible step away from the title of the "reddest sun" adopted by the semi-official Chinese press.

It is some years now since chance made me an eye-witness of the "cultural revolution", a tragic page in the history of China.

In China itself, where the chief initiators and leaders of the "cultural revolution" are still in power, that "revolution" is no longer so willingly recalled today. Indeed, there is nothing to take pride in. The Maoist regime, produced by the "cultural revolution", seeks to emerge in the international arena without the reputation of being a hoodlum destroying the cultural heritage of one of the most ancient civilisations.

The "cultural revolution" in China has been duly assessed by world opinion. The purpose of this book is to describe what I saw for myself and how I understood events in China in the first six months of the "cultural revolution".

I witnessed a section of the young generation in China leaning towards Maoism and being subjected to a terrible spiritual devastation. These young men were taught to resort to violence, to stage hysterical meetings and to engage in ceremonial adulation and glorification. Under the influence of Maoist demagoguery, they lost their thirst for knowledge, which young Chinese of any social status had always had.

In January 1967, the hungweipings were urged "to take power". Subsequently, too, their activity was expressed in the break-up of Party and government agencies and cultural centres, and in mutual bickering and bloody clashes. The anarchist tendencies among the hungweipings burst into full bloom.

The country faced a disaster: it was threatened with paralysis of all creative activity and a standstill in production. At this point it was the hungweipings who turned out to be superfluous and even dangerous for the Maoist leadership.

In the autumn of 1967, Mao Tse-tung told the army to "restore order". The army used force against the same hungweipings who had a year earlier been implanting the "thoughts of the great helmsman". The stubborn leaders were executed, many shot at the stadiums in the presence of tens of thousands of people. The bulk of the hungweipings were forcibly deported into the countryside for an indefinite period, there "to be corrected by peasant labour".

Millions of young people were deceived by the "great helmsman", who first corrupted their morals and then got rid of them as a superfluous burden. Since then the expulsion of the young people from the Chinese towns has become a systematic campaign. Thus, on September 11, 1972, *Jenmin jihpao* reported that over 400,000 persons had been deported to the countryside in the first eight months of 1972. As a result of the "cultural revolution", Chinese young people have not gained anything, but have lost a great deal. They have lost their opportunity to complete their education, and have had to abandon their hopes of working in their profession. They have lost their prospects for the future.

The establishment of new organs of power—Maoist "revolutionary committees"—began under army control and in the conditions of a fierce intestine struggle. On September 7, 1968, Premier Chou En-lai declared at a 100,000-strong meeting in Peking that "the whole country is red"—the revolutionary committees had been set up in the provinces. The legitimate Party and government agencies had been liquidated.

The "cultural revolution" resulted in a majority of the members of the CPC Central Committee, Secretariat and Politburo of the Central Committee being subjected to reprisals by the Maoists. The 9th Congress of the CPC was held in April 1969 and, in effect, became the constituent congress of a new, Maoist party. The report to the Congress was delivered by Lin Piao, who, according to the new CPC Rules, adopted at the 9th Congress, was declared to be Mao Tse-tung's successor and deputy. The 9th Congress did not bring stability to China, because the problems facing the country were not solved. The new Maoist leadership set up at the Congress is being reshuffled again and again.

In the autumn of 1970, the foreign press reported, Chen Po-ta, long a personal secretary of Mao Tse-tung's and head of the Maoist Group for the Affairs of the Cultural Revolution under the CPC Central Committee, was deposed. Soon Kang Sheng, an adviser of the same group, withdrew from its affairs and ceased to appear in public. Let us bear in mind that at the 9th Congress both these men had been included in the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the CPC Central Committee, which was to exercise supreme leadership of the country and consisted of only five men.

In the autumn of 1971, it was Lin Piao's own turn to disappear. Peking put out a fabricated version of the September 1971 events, which the bourgeois press has gladly accepted. According to this story, Lin Piao was accused of "ten crimes", including "preparation of a state coup against Chairman Mao Tse-tung", preparation of an "abduction of Mao Tse-tung", attempts "to kill Chairman Mao", etc. Lin Piao was also accused of "treason" and an "attempt to flee abroad".

The "Lin Piao affair" sparked off a new purge. Since September 1971, more than one-half of the 21 persons elected to the Politburo by the 9th Congress of the CPC have been removed, and only two—Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai—remain of the five members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo.

The 10th Congress of the CPC in August 1973 demonstrated once again that the Maoist policy at home was anti-socialist, and reaffirmed the anti-Soviet foreign-policy line of the 9th Congress of the CPC.

The nature of the Congress was best expressed in its attitude to the "cultural revolution". In the course of it, the political structure set up after the victory of the people's revolution was in effect destroyed, the Party, government and mass organisa-

tions were dispersed, millions of people were subjected to repression and persecution, and incalculable harm inflicted on the national economy.

Under the pressure of objective circumstances, the Congress was forced tacitly to depart (without admitting this in its official statements) from a number of fundamental propositions proclaimed by Mao Tse-tung in the course of the "cultural revolution". Today, the Maoists have no use for some of these slogans (like "fire at the headquarters", that is, the Party committees), because the Mao group is now no longer concerned about the take-over of power (it has already done that), but about how to stabilise and consolidate it. Hence the emergence of new slogans in the old Maoist line as during the "cultural revolution" period, the line of establishing absolute power for Mao Tse-tung and his accomplices throughout the country.

The men in Peking would now like to see the world forget about the barbarous methods and vandalism of the "cultural revolution". The sale of Chinese classical novels in earlier editions has now been permitted. Museums are being reopened, but only those where it is possible to conceal the damage caused to them during the "cultural revolution", while the press has started an extensive campaign over some archeological finds.

Of course, these are very superficial and tactical departures from the old line, which essentially remains the same. The Western press has broadly advertised the alleged "moderation" of Peking's line, discerning "achievements" everywhere, even in the sphere of culture. But despite the Maoists' tactical propaganda moves, no one will be able to forget the responsibility of the incumbent leadership, which was installed through the "cultural revolution". It was Mao Tse-tung who initiated and laid down the strategy of the "cultural revolution" with all its bacchanalia and vandalism.

The whole of social life in China is still shot through with the cult of Mao Tse-tung. As in the old days, the Maoist leadership's policy is marked by diehard anti-Sovietism, the hope of splitting the revolutionary forces of our day, great-power hegemonistic aspirations, and neglect of the Chinese people's vital interests. An editorial article in *Jenmin jihpao* on the occasion of the national holiday on October 1, officially designated the Soviet Union as "enemy Number One". The Soviet proposals for disarmament, and the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons were subjected to fierce attacks. Peking's

diplomacy has tried hard to slow down the détente in Europe. The Chinese press has carried slanderous articles about the situation in the USSR.

Thus, there has been no substantial change in the Maoist regime. While the Peking press may keep mum about the hungweiping orgy, and the bourgeois press in the West easily hands out indulgences to those who had organised pogroms, the victims of the "cultural revolution" are hardly ever likely to forget about it. In that period, many people in China lost their relatives, some being tortured to death by the hungweipings, others committing suicide because they were unable to stand the abuse and humiliation. The deceived generation of the young people will not forget the past either. The shaky soil of Maoist policy, which has engulfed the best men in the country and which has seriously weakened China, has left an imprint of uncertainty on every aspect of life in modern Chinese society.

In the sphere of Soviet-Chinese relations, the "cultural revolution" carried the Maoists from rallies at the USSR's Embassy gates in Peking to armed provocations along the Soviet-Chinese border. The Maoists' adventurist policy is opposed by the firm and steadfast policy of the CPSU, the line formulated by the 24th Congress of the Party. The principal line pursued by the CPSU and the Soviet Government with respect to China combines consistent defence of the principles of Marxism-Leninism, strengthening of unity of the socialist countries and the world communist movement, with resolute rebuffs to any encroachments on the Soviet people's interests. At the same time, the Report of the CPSU Central Committee delivered by Leonid Brezhnev to the 24th Party Congress expressed the conviction of the CPSU and the Soviet Government that an improvement in relations between the USSR and the PRC would meet the vital and long-term interests of both countries, the interests of socialism, the freedom of nations and stronger world peace. Brezhnev added: "We are prepared in every way to help not only to normalise relations but also to restore neighbourliness and friendship between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China and express the confidence that this will eventually be achieved".¹

REQUEST TO READERS

Progress Publishers would be glad to have your opinion of this book, its translation and design.

Please send your comments to 21, Zubovsky Boulevard, Moscow, USSR.

¹24th Congress of the CPSU, Moscow, 1971, pp. 16-17.

Progress Publishers will soon publish:

TURCHENKO V. *The Scientific and Technological Revolution and the Revolution in Education.* Progress. Current Problems Series

Sociologist Vladimir Turchenko from the Siberian division of the USSR Academy of Sciences takes a look at the changes which have taken place in teaching methods and syllabuses in the age of the scientific and technological revolution. The author's theoretical conclusions are based on a wide range of sociological research findings made by his Soviet colleagues. Turchenko holds that the basic trends in the revolution in education are the introduction of teaching machines, a reduction in the age for starting instruction, a combination of academic study with production experience, "uninterrupted" education, etc.

In addition to its utilitarian value, education must, according to Turchenko, promote the all-round development of the individual. He stresses the urgent need to do away with those social conditions, which on a mass scale constantly foster illiteracy and semiliteracy of the masses. Only under socialism does education become the profound concern of the whole of society.

Progress Publishers will soon publish:

GORDON L., KLOPOV E. *Man after Work.* Progress. Socialism Today Series

In recent years since the introduction of the five-day working week men and women in the Soviet Union have been able to enjoy a great more free time. To ensure its positive utilisation a good deal of sociological research is now being devoted to the everyday routines and way of life of the working people. Research surveys have been conducted at factories in Dniepropetrovsk, Zaporozhye, Odessa, Kostroma, Taganrog and other towns in the USSR. The findings collected constitute the factual core of this book by well-known Soviet sociologists Leonid Gordon and Eduard Klopov. The book proffers a detailed description of the lives led by various sections of industrial workers, grouped together according to socio-demographic, educational and material characteristics.

Aleksei Zhelokhovtsev, a graduate of the Moscow Institute of Orientology, speaks Chinese, English and French. Having made a close study of the short novels, stories and folklore of medieval China, he wrote *Hwa Pen: the Urban Story in Medieval China*, which earned him the degree of Candidate of Science (Philology).

The book is based on a diary he kept in China while a trainee at the Peking Pedagogical University at the very height of the hungweiping movement. He tells of the outrages and atrocities against the Chinese Communists and leading intellectuals, and the barbarous destruction of China's ancient cultural heritage. He describes what he saw with a great deal of sympathy for the Chinese people and a sense of pain over the tragedy inflicted upon it by the Maoist leaders.

The latest edition of his book gives a fuller account of the consequences of the Chinese leader's "cultural" policy and shows the true reasons why China's millions have been denied real culture.



Imported by
**IMPORTED
PUBLICATIONS, INC.**
320 West Ohio Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610
Phone 312/787-9017